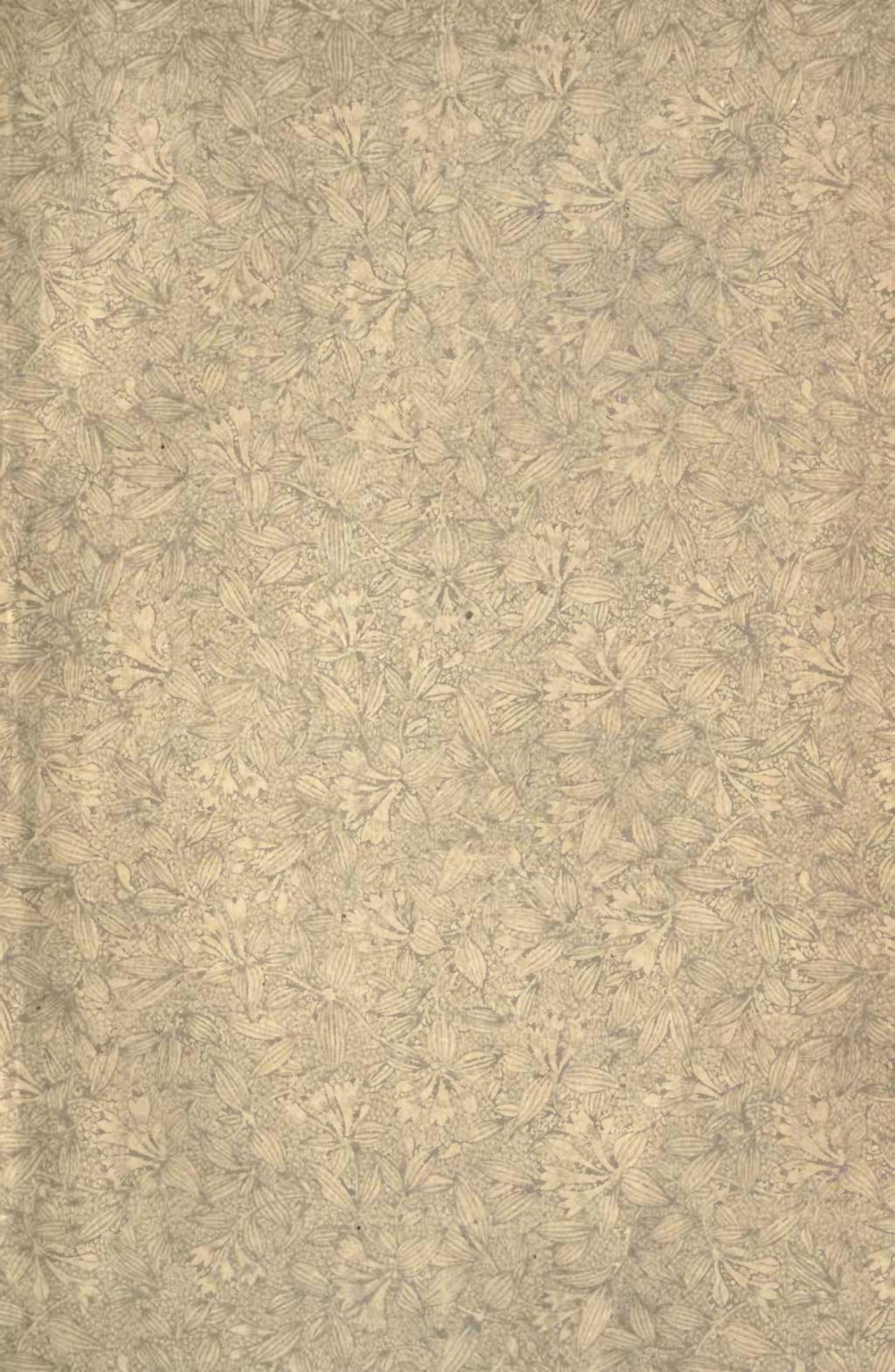
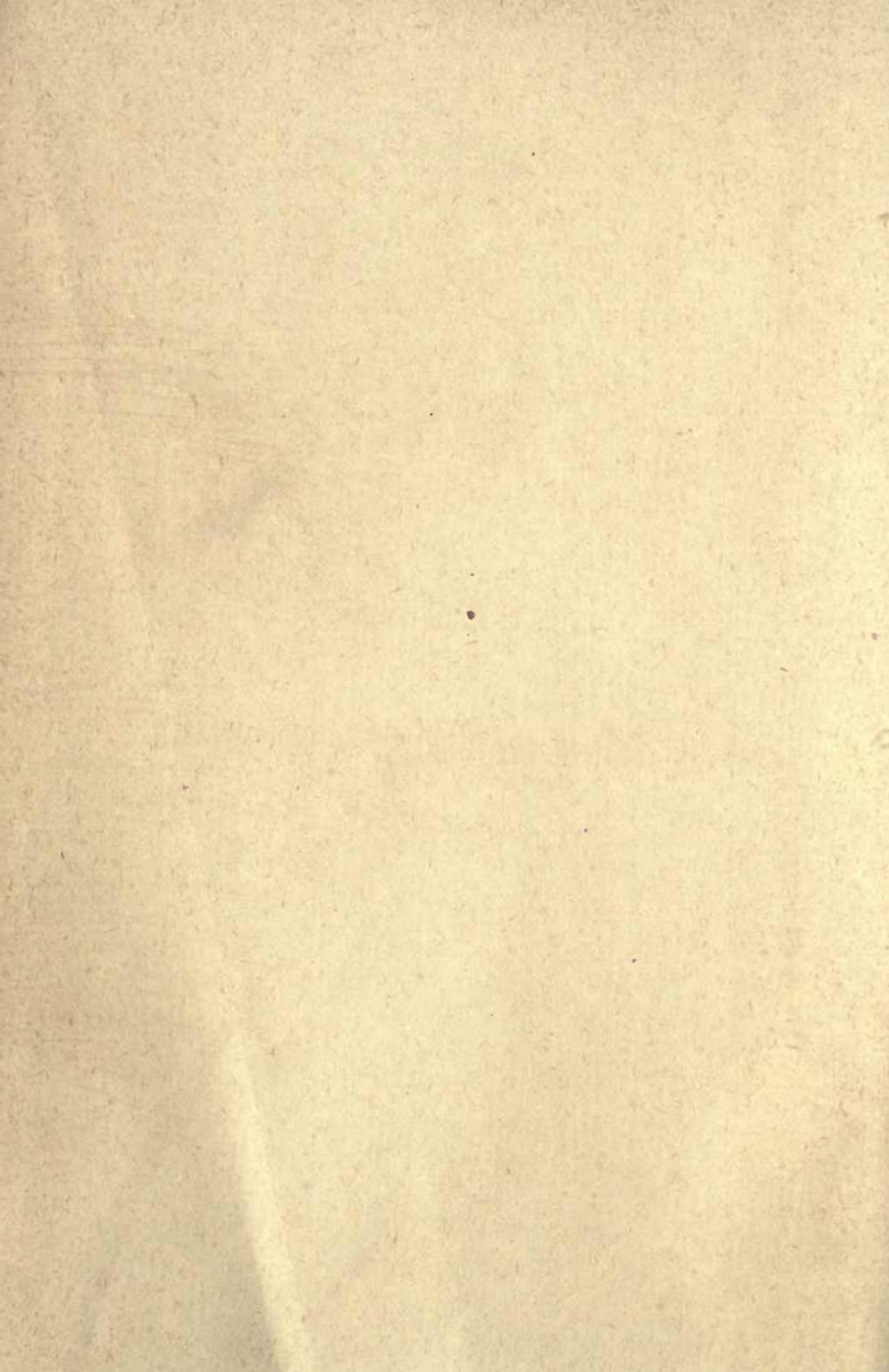


The
Rise and Fall
of the
English Commonwealth

J. ALLANSON PICTON, M. A.

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LESSONS

FROM THE

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English Commonwealth.

SIX LECTURES
By *James* ALLANSON PICTON, M.A., M.P.

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PREFACE.

THE purpose of the following lectures has been to bring home to the members of the class now rising into power some of the lessons in political ethics derivable from a study of the Commonwealth period. They can hardly, therefore, be considered historical lectures; except so far as this, that they take their text from the story of our own country.

The safeguard of political progress in England has always been the previous preparation of each section of the community before it rose in its turn to responsibility and power. The small proprietors, yeomanry, and leading burgesses who, as a class, were raised to power by the uprising against Charles I., had long been educated by Puritan influences for the part they had to play. The lower middle class and ten-pound householders enfranchised by the great Reform Bill were, in some respects, all the better for the long delays preceding their victory; because they were thus practised

and disciplined in the self-control, and mutual concession and organisation necessary to genuine freedom. The cynical saying of Lord Sherbrooke, then Mr. Lowe, after the passage of the last Reform Act, that “we must now educate our masters,” has less practical force than has often been attributed to it. For they are our masters only because a long process of historical development has forced them to the front; and the same process has necessarily educated them for their position. Or, at least, so far as they are not educated for it, they will not—indeed, they cannot—assume it. A small committee of middle-class politicians can always manipulate as they please the ignorant and thoughtless “residuum,” which Mr. Bright once seemed to dread. It is only as the multitude acquire ideas, and meditate on them, and form them into a political ideal, only as they organise themselves, and marshal their numbers by brain power, that they become really independent and powerful. It is not so everywhere. In France, the habit of revolution has made “mere numbers” a real danger. They are a danger, however, not because of the ballot box, but because of the barricade.

They are a danger, not because they force their own ideas on their rulers, but because they have no ideas at all, beyond the vaguest phrases, on which to insist.

It is just because, amongst us, the masses rise to power only as they are educated, that we should be so anxious for the spread of political knowledge, and the moral inspiration, without which it is valueless, because ineffective. Not with any thought of limiting, moderating, or modifying the radicalism of the masses do I support a movement like that of the Political and Social Education League; but much more in the hope that mental development will lead to organisation, and organisation to a united force, omnipotent to sweep away long lingering abuses.

J. ALLANSON PICTON.

LONDON, *December, 1883.*

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY	I
LECTURE I.	
"TREASON AND LOYALTY"	25
LECTURE II.	
"THE LIMITS OF MORAL FORCE"	52
LECTURE III.	
"THE LIMITS OF PHYSICAL FORCE"	77
LECTURE IV.	
"THE SOURCES OF POPULAR ENTHUSIASM"	102
LECTURE V.	
"REPUBLICANISM: FORM AND SUBSTANCE"	128

LESSONS
FROM THE
RISE AND FALL
OF
The English Commonwealth.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE conspicuous absence of Oliver Cromwell from our national monuments is, perhaps, due to something more than mere courtly conventionalism. It expresses accurately enough a still prevalent tendency to regard the eleven years between 1648 and 1660 as a gap in our history, a wild interval of storm and chaos suggestive of nothing but warnings against insubordination. It must surely have occurred to you that the period in question is rarely referred to by way of example. Rhetoric enough has indeed been expended upon it, and the leading characters of the time have been alternately glorified and denounced with an emphasis rarely applied to the historical persons of any other age. But the forms of government then in force, the domestic policy pursued, and the practical

legislation enacted have been mere matters for theoretic discussion. So far as concerns applicability to our own wants, very little has been said about them.

One reason for this, no doubt, has been our salutary habit of building upon constitutional precedents. Practices of royal courts in the days of the Plantagenets, or Tudors, or Stuarts established rules which have been wrought into the very framework of our law. Thus judicial decisions then given, as to the right of petition, or free speech, or taxation, are strictly illustrative of English political development. And the manner in which forms were widened or relaxed, or explained, to adapt them to new stages of national growth, has a very obvious and practical bearing on contemporary politics. But the Commonwealth was not, in any ordinary sense of the word, constitutional at all. It was wholly abnormal. Its legislation goes for nothing, except so far as it was confirmed afterwards. Its institutions of a protectorate, and triers, and major-generals, and its peculiar parliaments, and its executive council, were wholly aberrant from the line of development followed previously, and afterwards resumed. It is impossible, therefore, to look to such a period for constitutional precedents; and this consideration goes far to account for the infrequency of practical inferences from the Commonwealth period to the circumstances of the present day.

Yet, though the fact may thus be explained, it cannot be said to be wholly justified. The men of the Commonwealth were not less English, but, in a sense I will presently explain, even more English than those of any other time. The unusual forms then given to the

constitution are explicable not by any deficiency of national feeling, but by its extraordinary intensity and passion. The electric currents that flow unceasingly, and for the most part imperceptibly, through the frame of the world are capable of taking many wonderful forms when the balance between strength and resistance becomes abnormal. The force is always and everywhere the same in its nature and its laws, but sometimes it breaks into sound, as in the telephone, and again bursts into splendour, as in the electric light. On a grander scale, it rends the air with a momentary vacuum, followed by reverberations of thunder, or it fills the northern sky with coruscations of luminous colour. But all its varieties of form are due to changed proportions of intensity and resistance. And its laws are most easily studied, not in its normal forms of weak and imperceptible currents, but in the extraordinary manifestations which come of accumulated obstacles and exaggerated strength. Just so is it with the currents of social and political feeling that play to and fro amongst an incorporated people. The national consciousness—a compound of a felt generic identity, with realised common interests, and a subordination of the one to the many—is always present even in the quietest times. But when it is concerned only with state ceremonial, or court gossip, or a penny in the income tax, this national consciousness is so weak and vague that its real laws, with their latent potency, are very much obscured. If you would see the national life at its brightest, you must consider it in those times when common fears and hopes are most profoundly stirred by some great emergency. You must watch when some

imperious will opposes national impulse. You must note the increasing intensity of its throbs as the pent-up force accumulates. You must observe its behaviour at a time of deadlock—whether apparent defeat dissipates or concentrates its energies, whether passion distracts or disciplines it, whether excitement brings liability to panic, whether satisfaction is given by words or things. In such periods a nation is most itself, just as a man's deepest nature comes out in times of peril. And therefore in such periods the national character may be studied with special advantage.

Still, it may be said, this is scarcely to the point just now; because we are anticipating practical lessons on contemporary politics, not mere criticisms of national character. That is so; but the truth at which I am driving is this, that when Englishmen are most themselves they best show what kind of institutions they need. And the peculiarity of the Commonwealth period was this, that in a paroxysm of national feeling it gave premature embodiment to ideas too advanced for the time. By studying it in some of its aspects, we learn, not so much the needs of that age, but the needs of the twentieth century. As there come sometimes a few hot sunny days in the early spring, when leaves and bloom bud forth only to be nipt by the east winds, but giving meantime a premature manifestation of the hidden life of the awakening trees; so the Commonwealth period brought out some phases of policy too advanced for the times, and speedily blighted by the Restoration.

The union of England, Scotland, and Ireland in one harmonious body politic was a dream of Cromwell's which has

to be realised yet. The reform of Chancery was even a bolder design of the Protector, a design worked out with marvellous pertinacity and patience of detail. Legislation with similar aims, though by different methods, has been carried in our own day; but it may fairly be questioned whether reforms in the interest of suitors have been so thorough as those of Oliver. It remains for the next century, or even for the one after that, to make the identification of law and justice as complete as he had conceived possible. The Universities, during the brief rule of Oliver, were more efficient as the highest schools of the nation, and less desirable as resorts for pleasure-seekers than they had ever been before, perhaps than they have ever been since. The army, far from being the insolent prætorian cohort commonly supposed, was in truth an effective instrument of the best mind of the nation. The navy, without being inspired to the same extent by the spiritual impulses of the time, was a thing for use, not for show and experiment. The modern idea of personal rule as the final expression of democracy was anticipated by the Protectorate and its major-generals. For, though Cromwell was not constitutionally appointed, there is a great deal to suggest, and almost to prove, that the nation acquiesced in his supremacy, as, at least, a temporary guard over the results of victory. For the major-generals so much as this cannot be said; but, at any rate, the distribution of the country into districts was prophetic of the provincial federation, which the increasing business of Parliament may one day make necessary.

The attention to detail, characteristic both of legislative and executive action under Oliver, was illustrated in his

ordinances on vagrants and paupers, on highways, byways, rivers, and nuisances, on duelling, on gambling and brutal sports, on the drainage of the Fens, and a hundred other matters usually the prey of the circumlocution office. The methods adopted in some of these ordinances could not be imitated now. But in some respects they are suggestive of coming centuries rather than of the past, or even the present. For their uniform plan was to strike directly at a public evil, totally regardless of private interest standing in the way; or to supply an evident public need, without waiting either upon precedent or prejudice. When we think how in the present age game laws have been maintained to curse the many and amuse the few; when we remember how the systematic robbery of tenants has been paradoxically defended as maintaining the *rights of property*; when we observe how the popular demand for education is even yet baulked of satisfaction, lest in too free a competition clerical schools should suffer extinction, we cannot help envying the carelessness of class interests and the uncompromising directness of aim characteristic of the Protector's ordinances.

The system of Parliamentary representation under the Protector was by no means the desirable model which it is sometimes thought to have been. For the franchise was very limited, and there was a large disfranchisement of disarmed Royalists. But the distribution of seats was remarkably just, and clearly designed for one purpose only—to find out the opinion of the majority of voters. If any forthcoming reform bill succeeds in adapting our representation equally well to a more liberal franchise and a larger population, we shall have little reason to complain.

In other respects the Parliamentary system of the Commonwealth was in advance even of our day. For it was a self-acting machine, requiring neither King nor Protector to start it. If the Protector should fail to summon a Parliament at the proper time, it was to be done by the Lord Chancellor without him. And if the Lord Chancellor should conspire with the Protector, then all municipal and county authorities were charged to hold elections and return members without receiving any writs at all. Further, the veto of the Protector was suspensory only; and if at the end of twenty days the Parliament was still of the same opinion, then the disputed measure was to pass as a matter of course. Until the last year of the Protectorate, the Commonwealth Parliament also had this superiority over all succeeding ones—that it was unencumbered by a House of Lords. Whatever may be the case with other peculiarities of the Commonwealth, it in this respect only anticipated the inevitable future.

But there was one effort above all others in which the Protector sought to anticipate the modern spirit; and that was the endeavour to establish religious equality. In no respect, perhaps, was he so far beyond his own age as in this. It is admitted, of course, that he found it impossible to carry out his policy consistently. It must also be granted that he himself was inevitably tinged with the prevalent intolerance of the time. No one can absolutely resist permeation by the social medium in which he is plunged. A man whose destiny lies in aristocratic and ecclesiastical circles may by observation and reflection become an ardent reformer. But he is sure to retain many curious relics of his former views. Wherever con-

viction is not clearly irresistible, social influence will keep him inconsistently true to his former tendencies. And, conversely, where a man of the people pushes his way amongst the upper ten thousand, the subtle influences of society subject him to a process analogous to electro-plating; and his democratic theories, if not explained away, are at any rate silvered over with sweetness and moderation. The softening effect of office upon Radicalism is not to be attributed wholly to the difficulty of embodying Radical demands in legislative measures, but it is doubtless due in some degree to this same principle of permeation by the surrounding medium.

Even so strong a soul as Oliver Cromwell could not escape the action of this principle. He was born into a generation who really believed that everlasting weal or woe depended on a right apprehension of theological doctrines. And, whatever may be said to the contrary in the interests of any particular theory about Church and State, it is impossible that such a belief can really exist without very gravely affecting political conduct. Whether it be logical or not, I confess it seems rather hard for human nature calmly to discuss questions of earthly politics with a man tottering on the brink of perdition. If, when you meet the secretary of a Radical club to discuss a coming election, you were to notice in him clear symptoms of cholera or typhus fever, I think you would probably drop politics and send for the doctor. You could not go on discussing wards and canvassers with a probably dying man. Now, precisely the same principle applies to intercourse with men on the way to hell, in exact proportion to the reality of your belief in their doom. A genuine faith

in everlasting penalties, to be exacted in the next world for wrong opinions held in this, is therefore quite incongruous with a spirit of tolerance. Of this we have only too many illustrations even in our own age. The doctrine of "religious equality" is often on the lips of political Liberals; but when any attempt is made to push it to its logical issue, either in elementary schools, or in the imperial Parliament, a sudden defection of weak brethren throws power into the hands of exclusive bigotry. Now this fatal belief in damnation for opinion was much more robust and real in Cromwell's generation than in ours. And therefore we need not be surprised if his notions of religious equality left scope for further growth.

Another difficulty pressing more hardly upon his generation than on ours was the entanglement of theology and politics. It revolts us to know that Cromwell passionately supported the prohibition of the Mass in Ireland, and joined in suppressing the Anglican worship in England. But when we remember what busy and persistent political intriguers were the priests of both communions, we must own that he had much excuse for his inconsistency. That Oliver's difficulty on this question was mainly political, is to a certain extent proved by the fact that in the time of his supremacy he promised Mazarin to be more indulgent to Romanists, and only asked for patience on the score of the difficulty of his position. As to the Anglicans, he paid much respect to their learned clergy, and showed his uneasiness as a persecutor by conniving at Anglican services contrary to law. Notably this was done in the case of Dr. Hewitt, and the perverse entanglement of theology with politics was shown by the reverend doctor's complicity in an intrigue for the Protector's assassination.

We are not without analogies to such a danger even in these times. Any one who studies the history of national education must feel that this very entanglement of theology and politics has been one of the chief hindrances in our way, to say nothing of the universities or of the public schools—which, in spite of all reforms, are still the peculum of a sect—three-fourths of the controversies are caused by ecclesiastical influences. The distribution of rates, the lowering or abolition of school fees, the subjects to be taught, the powers of local managers under boards, are questions apparently independent of theology. But school board members, or even readers of monthly reviews, are well aware that the chief factor in determining all such questions is the interest of the Church of England. In such a condition of things it is often difficult to do the justice we desire to the self-denying labours of the clergy. An expression of sympathy or admiration is too often accepted as an endorsement of their anathemas against the invading school board. You are expected to show your thanks to them for doing imperfectly a neglected work, by now preventing the entrance of those who could do it a great deal better. In other words, gratitude to the clergy is to be exhibited by the injuring the children whose interest alone they profess to consider.

When such perplexities are caused in our own day by the entanglement of religion and politics, we need not wonder if Cromwell sometimes failed to see his way in dealing with Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Quakers. Nevertheless, he had hold of the right principle. This is well set forth in a letter of 1644, to Major-General Crawford, a Presbyterian, who wanted to

dismiss a certain Colonel Packer, for this reason among others—that he was an Anabaptist. It is noteworthy that Oliver treats this charge very gingerly, much as we in our time treat the allegation of Atheism. The accusation of Anabaptist opinions is one not to be made lightly nor without proof. “Are you sure of it?” asks Oliver; as though it were a reckless thing hastily to fling about such epithets. Still it occurs to him that Packer very likely is an Anabaptist after all; and he swallows the unwelcome fact with a palpably wry face. “Are you sure of that? Admit he be; shall that render him incapable to serve the public? . . . Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions. If they be willing to serve it faithfully, that satisfies.”

Between seven and eight years after the date of this controversy with the militant Presbyterian Crawford, Oliver was called to contend against Crawford’s clerical brethren for a larger toleration in a somewhat different form. At the latter period the Lord-General and his preaching soldiers were in Edinburgh, and, as strategic reasons kept them for several months from using the sword of the flesh, they betook themselves, as was their wont, to spiritual weapons. They did this the more eagerly because the Scottish clergy, in fear of these fighting sectaries, had sought refuge in the Castle, and left the pulpits vacant. Nevertheless, they thundered anathemas against the unauthorised intruders, and in particular condemned the risk incurred of promulgating damnable error through such unreserved freedom of speech. To these anathemas Oliver replied, and his mode of dealing with the last argument is noteworthy. It is in effect a sturdy declara-

tion that liberty with danger is better than slavery with safety. "Your pretended fear lest error should step in, is "like the man who would keep all wine out of the country "lest men should be drunk. It will be found an unjust "and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty "upon a supposition he may abuse it. When he doth "abuse it, judge. If a man speak foolishly, ye suffer him "gladly, because ye are wise; if erroneously, the truth "more appears by your conviction of him. Stop such a "man's words by sound words which cannot be gainsaid."

So far Oliver has no difficulty. He is of Milton's opinion, that, when truth and falsehood fairly grapple, the chances are on the whole very largely in favour of truth. But it occurs to him that he lays himself open to a retort very damaging in his day. No matter how foolishly or falsely a man speaks, the law, it seems, is not to interfere. In that case this English sectary must be prepared to hear blasphemers publicly denounce spiritual sanctities and holy names, which even he professes to venerate. Therefore on this point the writer guards himself. "If a man speak blasphemously, *or to the disturbance of the public peace*, let the civil magistrate punish him;" observe, not any spiritual court. The words suggest that Oliver was inclined to regard this question of blasphemy as a matter, not of religion, but of social order. Now this gives a suggestion having a very obvious application to some difficulties of our day.

The civil magistrate has been more than once appealed to in our time to suppress or punish utterances described as blasphemy. But it has not usually been alleged in such cases that there was any danger to the public peace; and

the result has uniformly been to confer gratuitous advertisement and a halo of martyrdom on the opinions and persons whom the prosecutors ostensibly desired to repress. If there is obvious danger of a riot through gratuitous offence to public sentiment, the civil magistrate may be bound to interfere, whether the disturbers be the Salvation Army or the Skeleton Army, or members of a "Free Thought" association. But the magistrate should, at the same time, take care to protect every one impartially in the legitimate exercise of free speech, and of the right publicly to propagate opinion.

The question of immoral teaching is a delicate one. No one, for instance, has a right to make a filthy gain by selling papers obviously intended to attract by exciting low passions, which it is the interest of society to keep under control. There are some cases of the kind which, opposed as I am to the lash, I should not grieve overmuch to see treated with the cat-o'-nine-tails. But what is called blasphemy stands on a very different ground. The term itself is so elastic and so changeful in its significance, that what is blasphemy in one age becomes fashionable liberalism in another. In Oliver's days it was blasphemy to deny the doctrine of the Trinity; more than one man had his tongue bored through with a hot iron for nothing more. It was blasphemy to maintain the natural humanity of Christ; it was blasphemy to deny the infallibility of the Bible. But all these opinions have since become matters of ordinary discussion. It seems at first sight, therefore, very difficult to lay down any general rule applicable to so variable a term.

Yet it is not impossible. The true principle is respect

for social susceptibilities. For instance, if I travel in Spain, I may meet a priestly procession passing along the street to convey the "Host" to a dying man. As a Protestant—and perhaps something more—I can have no veneration for the "Host" considered in itself. Nay, I may be inclined to contempt for what I consider the superstitions it represents. But there is something more than the Host to be thought of. There are the surrounding people, who have a genuine belief in its supernatural sanctity. Whether I think them ignorant, or misled, I have no right whatever to offend their feelings by contemptuous gesture or grimace, or words of ridicule. Action of this kind might possibly demonstrate my sturdy Protestantism, but it would, at the same time, stamp me as very much the reverse of a gentleman. Under such circumstances, I am not ashamed to say that I have taken off my hat, not out of veneration for the Host, but out of respect for the religious feelings of my fellow-men.

Now, this same principle is obviously applicable to the question of blasphemy in a free country. We are not only justified in claiming freedom of thought and speech; it is our bounden duty to do so. But if we so use our freedom as needlessly to offend and wound the susceptibilities of our fellow-men, then we overstep our right and sin against social order. Mistakes are continually made on this subject by thinking only of the theological, and ignoring the human issues. Whatever opinions may be held on the mystery of ultimate power by which the universe is swayed, all must agree that human irreverence can touch it no more than London smoke can pollute the stars. So far as that is concerned, the question of blasphemy need not

trouble us. But loyalty to the social whole of which we form a part should constrain us to some decent respect for common susceptibilities. Now, after the susceptibilities of domestic affection, there are none so quick and so easy to wound as religious feelings. I cannot, therefore, hold those guiltless, who, by ostentatious caricatures or public jest, deliberately seek to hurt the reverential sentiments of the community. Still, the offence is one with which no magistrate should ever meddle, except to prevent a breach of the peace. For, besides the danger of interfering with free speech, there is the obvious objection mentioned before—that prosecutions in such cases run the risk of ennobling mere vulgarity with an air of martyrdom. After all, irreverence is but a base form of intolerance. It is caused not only by a want of susceptibility to the grand mystery of existence, but by a lack of fellow-feeling for awe-struck humanity as it climbs with painful steps from darkness towards the light. Such an evil is best corrected, not by force, but by the pity with which we treat blindness, deafness, and every defect of faculty in body or mind.

Such are a few illustrations, taken at random, of the practical hints given towards the solution of contemporary questions by the story of the English Commonwealth. Their peculiar value lies, as we shall see more clearly in succeeding lectures, in the comparative freedom of that revolutionary time from the warping influences of precedent and compromise. I say *comparative* freedom, for of course no human being ever was, or could be, entirely free from such influences. When pre-historic men advanced to the use of copper or bronze, it might have been

expected that so great a change in material would at once revolutionise the forms of weapons. But I suppose I am right in saying that the earliest metal implements show a slavish persistency in reproducing out of a malleable and fusible substance the forms previously necessitated by brittle and semi-crystalline flint, or jade, or obsidian. The Japanese of advanced opinions strutting about in a dress-coat and chimney-pot hat is a melancholy illustration of the very limited originality possible to a people even in a revolutionary stage. And the English race, perhaps more than most others, is possessed by an instinctive conservatism. Thus, in the victory of the Long Parliament, the Crown and the House of Lords disappeared ; but the need for a permanent personal head of the Commonwealth—a “single person,” as Cromwell said—was still regarded by the nation at large as fundamental. I suppose it is so still ; and he would be no true patriot who should prematurely raise the question. Yet, until in some quarter of the world a Commonwealth emerges without either King or President, the polity of the future will not have been revealed. Personal government, in the sense of personal execution of the national will, there certainly must be ; but it must be a form of personal government answering much more readily to the changing needs of a nation than any Presidency, even though periodically elective, can possibly do. This is a subject, however, to which we shall turn in the concluding lecture, on “Republicanism—Form and Substance.” I merely allude to it now as illustrating the sort of conservatism which binds us, even when we least suspect it, to the forms of the past.

All I say of the period of the Commonwealth is, that it

was more free than any other time since the English settlement in Britain from blind obedience to precedent and compromise. There was an almost brutal directness in the aim of legislative measures straight at the thing to be accomplished, no matter what vested rights and wigged officialisms interposed their awful forms in front of the mark to be hit. Bishops and clergy, University magnates, Chancery Judges and attorneys, all succumbed to this drastic vigour. Not Cromwell only, but public opinion, demanded a *Gospel Ministry*, as it was termed, working universities and cheap law; and for the time they got them. Whitlocke stood aghast at his master's unceremonious dealing with the solemnities of Chancery, and, after an agonised conflict between commercial and professional instincts, he incurred deprivation of his post. But with three thousand cases in arrear, Oliver could not stop to discuss archæology. He was legislating for the living age, and its needs alone determined his action.

No doubt this was in a large degree owing to his individual character, which was eminently practical rather than speculative or pedantic. But it is equally true to say that the temper of the nation in his day gave special opportunities to his unconventional vigour, and made him inevitably the most conspicuous exponent of the national will. As iron molten by fierce heat is no longer restrained by cohesion from obeying instantly the force of gravitation, but flows instantly into any channel opened out for it, so, in that time of fusion by intense passion, the molecular stiffness, so to speak, of the national character disappeared, and executive energy took instantly the line suggested by obvious needs.

It may be thought this is inconsistent with a remark already made, that the men of that time were, in some respects, more intensely English than those of any other age. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that the weakening of some negative and restraining quality may give an enormous development to all the rest. A man is most himself when some noble excitement overpowers habitual indolence, and sets all his better nature free. So a nation may be very truly said to be most itself when the relaxation of a frosty conventionalism reveals the more active energies it had paralysed. It is, of course, true that the Englishmen who executed a King for high treason, and abolished the House of Lords, and revolutionised law courts were Englishmen in a very unusual mood. All I contend for is that they were *more* English than their predecessors or successors. In other words, the national character was not repressed, but exalted and intensified, by the excitement of the time.

This is not a mere question of words; it affects the practical value of any study of the Commonwealth. For if the derangement of that age was merely a morbid effect of misgovernment by the Stuarts, we can learn nothing from it except that Kings had better take care not to imitate the “Royal martyr”—a very needless moral, for the days are gone by when they would have any chance of doing so if they tried. But if, on the other hand, the Commonwealth was an accidentally hastened and premature anticipation of results for which the nation was not then ripe, it may be rich in practical suggestiveness. And this is the view I take of it. The accidental cause of that premature acceleration of political issues

was the overstrain and consequent collapse of Royal prerogative. The hurry with which the released nation then rushed along the obvious path of progress was not accidental, but the outcome of the persistent tendencies of the race; and the result was to compress into ten years some results that are still to us a far-off goal.

This view of the Commonwealth will, I hope, be confirmed, and will, at any rate, be illustrated in succeeding lectures. For the present, it will be sufficient here to guard against misunderstanding. Of course, I do not mean that the institutions of the Commonwealth are adapted to our needs. Its Protectorate, its Executive Council, its Parliament—apparently omnipotent, but in reality superfluous—are wholly incongruous with any political condition even conceivable in these days. But the institutions of a past age are never so instructive as the methods and principles that underlay them; and, if we look for these in the Commonwealth, we shall find the study profitable.

It has been with this view that the subjects of the succeeding lectures have been selected. The execution of the King, the proscription of Royalists, and the use of the epithets “malignant,” “well-affected,” or “godly,” are precedents which can have no application to our times; and, regarded superficially, they might well be taken for the mere madness of a desperate or fanatic age.

But, if you look beneath the surface, you will see that they set forth a new reading of the doctrine of loyalty and treason—a doctrine too true to be fashionable even yet, but lying at the basis of every human organisation, whether political, religious, or social.

When we remember how vain were the protests of Eliot and the arguments of Pym to avert the civil war, and when we recall how neither the brilliant triumphs nor the marked prosperity of Oliver's rule could slacken the deadly hate with which murderers sought his life, we must feel, I think, that moral force has its limits, which should always be kept in mind.

The story of the new model army is a sort of grim romance of real history, interesting even to the most hasty reader. The triumphant power of strong faith, uncompromising resolve, and heroic self-control was never more impressively exhibited. But the irreconcilable dissidence between the conquerors and the commonplace humanity of the May-pole and the tap-room proved to be a chasm that swallowed up all the spoils of victory, and left for us a lasting lesson on the limits of physical force. That lesson is, perhaps, peculiarly needed at the present time. I do not allude to little wars in which the Englishman shows his pluck by thrashing a foe of half his size, and by which, for the protection of British interests, we entail poverty, ignorance, and a low standard of life upon the mass of the British people. But when, in dealing with a sister island still mad with unforgotten oppressions, we hear the cry for coercion, and yet more coercion, as the only safe or sensible policy, I think it is well we should be reminded that physical force has its limits, and never did, nor ever can, generate the spirit of order, to which freedom is the breath of life.

The embodiment, discipline, and triumph of the Iron-sides, their popularity with the nation, and the wonderful readiness of the people at large to bear burdens and

make sacrifices for the common cause, present a spectacle confessedly admirable even in the view of those who still condemn the cause that triumphed. But Blackheath saw, in 1660, a spectacle not less striking when the Ironsides stood ranked in grim silence amidst a people hailing with frantic delight the advent of the man whom those soldiers had warned off the coasts as England's hereditary curse. The immediate reasons for national excitement in either case are now faded and dim. Yet something may surely be learned here as to the sources of popular enthusiasm.

And, finally, the whole story of the Commonwealth may teach how vain it is to contend for political forms, if the life to be clothed with form be absent; while, on the other hand, if the life be there, it may matter little that exceptional times and circumstances modify the form it would otherwise assume. The action of the new model army after its victory was not exactly in strict keeping with republican forms. The expulsion of the Long Parliament was, on any reading of the constitution, sheer lawless violence. The assumption of the Government by Oliver and his officers is popularly known as "usurpation." Yet there can be no doubt that there was a deeper sense in which all these actions were legitimate. In a rough way they expressed the will of the nation; and so long as they continued to do so their results were secure.

On the other hand, history can show republics which were merely oligarchies, ruled by a few families entirely in the interests of a privileged class. "Commonwealth" is a noble English word, expressive of the collective

interests that impel the subordination of the one to the many, and of the authority that demands the loyalty of each separate member to the whole of which he forms an organic part. "Republic" is the Latin equivalent of that word. But there is this difference between them, at least in practice, that "commonwealth" fixes attention more on the substantial fact of common interests, while "republic" suggests rather a particular form of constitution for safeguarding those interests. Hence the term "commonwealth" is often used where "republic" would be inapplicable. In discussing political questions in England we often speak of the safety or the prosperity of the commonwealth, notwithstanding our monarchical form of government. But the term "republic" would be considered inaccurate. In truth, its significance has come to be mainly negative. It means, in ordinary speech, a government without a monarch. But the absence of a monarch is no guarantee whatever for the supremacy of collective interests over those of a class or a clique. Paris has more than once or twice seen her people shot down in hundreds by a so-called republican government resolved upon repressing free speech and public spirit. I do not say that all suppressions of popular violence in France have been in the interests of officialism. But some of them undoubtedly have been; and they have illustrated the possibility of a republican form of government without any substantial realisation of the true idea of a commonwealth. The right of public meeting, the freedom of the press, and liberty of collective action have by no means always been included in the French interpretation of the term republic. Nor, indeed, in our understanding of them, were these

commonplaces of freedom tolerated by the English Commonwealth. Yet, on the other hand, I think it may be reasonably held that the common interest was much more obviously kept in view by Oliver Cromwell than by the French Directorate, for instance, or by President Mac-mahon. Thus there is opened up an interesting and somewhat complex problem as to the relations of form and substance in the conception of a republic or commonwealth. And with that discussion we shall conclude our present study.

I hope it will not be found unprofitable thus to review the real lessons taught by the English Commonwealth. In its apparently absolute and utter collapse, a process of reaction was set up which distorted and often reversed its teachings. It came to be treated as a morbid paroxysm of fanatic bitterness, a triumph of gloomy sectarianism over the healthy and cheerful instincts of the English race. Nay, this misinterpretation has been favoured by the spiritual descendants of the Puritans; for they have claimed for theological doctrines and ecclesiastical forms the virtue that lay-in the roused and indignant manhood of the time. I shall avoid religious controversy. I shall not challenge the greatness of Calvinism as the masculine effort of a pre-scientific age to embody the laws, at once pitiless and beneficent, that hold the universe in a rigid and invincible order. But we shall endeavour to go behind forms of opinion incidental to a particular stage of human progress, and discern, if we can, the immortal moral forces that worked through those opinions.

On the other hand, an opposite school, making the most of the dreadful shadows cast far into the after-time by the

smoke of civil war, has stigmatised the most heroic period in our annals as the time of the “Great Rebellion,” and has confused religion with unreasoning submission to the powers that be. But we shall find, I trust, that the brightest inspirations of religion taught, and teach, not servility to an individual man or to a form of government, but self-sacrificing devotion to the Commonwealth. Loyalty to our kind is better than loyalty to our king. Indeed, the latter has no worthy meaning except as it is interpreted by the former. We shall learn, at the same time, that though moral power works slowly, making large demands on hope, faith, and love, the discontent of an unhappy people, while it may be repressed, is never to be remedied by force. And, finally it may be, in our consideration of the true Commonwealth, we shall catch some far-off glimpse of the world-wide democracy in which all kingdoms shall ultimately merge, and in which order and progress shall bring peace on earth and good-will amongst men.

LECTURE II.

TREASON AND LOYALTY.

IN the spring of the year 1642, when it was clear that the issues between Charles I. and his Parliament would have to be settled on the battle-field, the Puritanic Commons were much exercised in mind to distinguish from the sin of rebellion their resistance even unto blood. They were law-abiding men ; therefore, in the best sense of the word, loyal. They insisted that all they demanded from the King was faithfulness on his part to the ancient constitution of the realm. They believed that for them to give way would be to play the part of traitors to the people whom they represented ; and there was no conceivable issue which they would not rather face than this.

There were of course two parties amongst them, and these again were subdivided, as is always the case, into sections differing by various shades of opinion. But the majority in favour of resistance was so strong and so decided, that practically, at that time, the action of the House had almost the vigour of unanimity. There were, of course, if not in the majority itself, at least hanging on to its skirts, amiable compromisers, such as Lord Falkland, who at the last moment would have shirked the tremendous responsibility before them, and have bartered the welfare of future ages for a momentary peace. There were also weak brethren, men of deceptive promise, like Holles, Hotham

and Kimbolton, with no sufficient insight into the task before them, and incapable of the resolve which parts with life rather than with a purpose.

With such elements of uncertainty, what was it that gave rigidity, directness, force and persistency to the action of the Commons? It was the presence and moral supremacy of a comparatively few men, such as Pym, Hampden, Vane, Haselrigg and, though then comparatively obscure, Oliver Cromwell. These men had thoroughly grasped the situation. They knew their own minds. One issue of the conflict alone was tolerable to them even in thought. They were not pedants. They did not care in what language that issue was disguised, or in what forms it was wrapped up, so long as it was real, fixed and unalterable. The Commons must be made supreme controllers of the nation's resources, and, through its resources, of its energies and destiny. No solution which did not secure that was to them worth consideration. Any compromise which touched that essential issue would be flung aside disdainfully. But with forms, ceremonies, phrases, procedure, compromise might work its will.

Now, such men knew that to hold waverers fast, as well as to keep touch with the constituencies for whom they acted, the moral grounds of their inflexible attitude must be made as clear as the material advantages they hoped to gain. Nay, their own consciences required this of them. For Pym and Hampden were no Anarchists or Nihilists, but plain, sensible men, of as much worldly wisdom as Puritanic zeal. They were intensely English, not only in their regard for legal precedent, but in their acceptance of traditional morality, with little or no speculative inquiry

into its grounds. They naturally shrank from the stigma of treason. For, though they rejected the High Church doctrine of "a right divine to govern wrong," yet they were as porous as other mortals, and equally subject to permeation by the social atmosphere around them. The sentiment of horror at treason, carefully nursed by the feudal system, had been still further heightened by the splendid and arrogant royalty of the Tudors. And even the step from the sublime to the ridiculous in the succession of the British Solomon had not sensibly weakened the prevalent feeling that "rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft," a clear fraternisation with the arch-rebel Satan and the powers of darkness.

How then were these advocates of Parliamentary rights to clear their own souls and reassure their weaker brethren, when they found themselves passing a resolution that "his Majesty's subjects be put in a posture of defence"? For the foe against whom the defence was to be undertaken would seem to be obviously his Majesty himself. In this difficulty their sturdy common sense outdistanced all Jesuitical subtlety. They boldly assumed the principle for which they were contending, that the advisers of the Crown were responsible to Parliament, and to be brought to their senses like any other disorderly Englishmen by the whole force of the nation. If the King acted unconstitutionally, they spoke of him as the innocent victim of wicked counsellors, who were the proper objects of warlike resistance, and condign vengeance. They had already exemplified this principle in the case of Strafford. But the new seducers of a virtuous monarch were taking the field, and could not be brought to the block until their

forces had been overthrown in battle. Therefore it became the plain duty of a loyal House of Commons to commission soldiers who, in the name of King and Parliament, should march against these wicked counsellors, and by musket-fire and push of pike should rescue misguided Majesty from their evil company, in order to restore him to his faithful Commons.

Impatience of such constitutional fictions is irreconcilable with any appreciative study of English history. Indeed, in this particular case, the applicability of the word fiction may fairly be disputed ; for the Commons maintained that theirs was the true theory of the constitution. They maintained that the advisers of the Crown *were* responsible for the advice they gave, and, if wrong was done, the country had a right to assume that counsellors *were* to blame. If so, it was obviously a duty to rescue the King from their influence. Of course it was conceivable he would persist in being his own adviser and denying the country any remedy ; but the Commons cannot be blamed if they declined to consider such a contingency until it was forced upon them. Meanwhile, it was not out of any hypocrisy, but from sincere desire to follow a constitutional course, that they held fast the hope of rescuing the King from bad company.

But the constitution could not be subjected to an unnatural strain like that without giving way at its weak points—groaning and cracking like an old ship in a storm, till at last it opened its seams and went plump down in the deep. The Commons who thus repudiated the charge of rebellion were open to the retort that the definition of treason must be found in the statutes of the realm,

and that taking up arms to resist the King's command clearly came under that head. The King was, by virtue of his office, supreme commander of all the armed forces of the realm. To raise up regiments to resist the forces acting under his command was therefore to make war against the King; and, if this was not high treason, no such crime seemed possible.

But the Commons were equal to the occasion. In a declaration issued in May, 1642, they dwelt upon the indisputable fact that the Government of England was, on any theory of it; one of definite law and recognised order. The supreme authority for the enforcement of law and preservation of order resided in the Crown. But this fact did not imply any power on the part of the Crown to give capricious commands unknown to the law or unsanctioned by traditional order. In other words, the Crown meant the highest executive office; but that which was to be executed was the law, not the will of the man filling the office.

That this was a correct exposition of the constitution as the Long Parliament had received it from their fathers will not, I suppose, be denied by any legal authorities now. Of course the style of language used by Kings and Queens had often seemed to mean a great deal more; and the language of subjects in response to their gracious commands had seemed to echo their assumption. But the constitution of the country was not determined by royal speeches, but by statutes, and legal decisions, and practice; and these clearly showed that, except within very narrow limits, English monarchs had no other authority than that of enforcing the law. It was the authority of an office, not

of a person. If, then, the person holding the office were to give orders contrary to law,—which was to be preferred, the man or the office? Manifestly the office. Any other answer would be treason against the constitution which the office was meant to uphold.

This was the ground on which the Commons defended their armed resistance of illegal kingcraft. The royal authority meant the living force always at hand to put the law in motion; and therefore they said it was Hyde and Newcastle and Rupert who were really fighting against the Crown; no matter that they had the person called Charles Stuart with them; for, said the Commons, “the levying of war against his *laws* and *authority*, though not against his *person*, is levying war against the King; but the levying of force against his personal commands, though accompanied with his presence, and *not* against his laws and authority, but in the maintenance thereof, is no levying of war against the King, but *for* him.” Hence, they always enlisted their soldiers in defence of “King and Parliament.”

If this controversy had been nothing more than an exhibition of skill in quibbling and hair-splitting, it would have had no interest for us here. But it was something more than that; it was an endeavour on the part of the English Commons to give a rational interpretation to the law of treason. Treason means betrayal of trust, falsehood, treachery. How it came to pass that it is technically confined to a particular class of offences against one person in the State, we shall inquire presently. But the opinion of the Commons was that the essence of the crime consisted in traitorously striking at the organ of public authority, and so endangering the safety of the Common-

wealth. In other words, it was the nation that was the real object of the crime of treason, and the King only in so far as he represented the nation. Of course this was not the letter of the law; but the Commons were of opinion that if this was not the spirit of the law it ought to be so; and, as one mode of making law in England is the establishment of precedents, they had strained all their powers to secure one in the case of Strafford. That this man amply deserved his fate I have no manner of doubt. He had deliberately schemed to deprive the people of such poor liberties as they then enjoyed, and to subordinate all popular desires and interests to the will of one man. I can imagine no political crime so great as that. It is the assassination of a people. But, in point of law, it was not any offence against the people that was meant by high treason, but only an attempt to injure or compass the death of the King. Nevertheless, the Commons secured the condemnation of this man for treason. It is true that the prospect of failure before the judges compelled them to have recourse to a bill of attainder. Still, the sentence against him was enrolled in the records of the kingdom, and could not fail to throw a new light on the English conception of high treason.

The first article in Pym's draft of the charge against Strafford was that "he hath traitorously endeavoured to subvert the fundamental laws and government of England and Ireland, and instead thereof to introduce an arbitrary, tyrannical government contrary to law." The seventh article was that "by wicked slanders he hath incensed his Majesty against Parliaments." There were, as is the custom with such documents, a large number of other

counts in the indictment, with a view of spreading the net widely enough to make sure of the prey. But these two heads—the subversion of fundamental laws and insidious designs against Parliament—were, of course, the charges that ruined him.

Sir Henry Vane, the elder, testified that in the King's council, after the dissolution of the Short Parliament, Strafford had assured Charles that the Crown was now released from all constitutional fetters. The point was, what was to be done for money, seeing that Parliament had declined to grant any? "Sir," said Strafford, "you have now done your duty, and your subjects have failed in theirs; and, therefore, you are absolved from the rules of government, and may supply yourself in extraordinary ways. You have an army in Ireland which you may bring over to suppress any attempts at rebellion." Other counsellors did not remember the suggestion about the army in Ireland, but otherwise confirmed Vane's account of the advice given to the King. Now the Commons called this treason; and their wrath against it was as reasonable as it was implacable. Such insidious conspiracies against a growing constitution have no analogy whatever with the unpopular advice which may sometimes be given by a reactionary minister at the present day. But suppose the late Lord Beaconsfield, when he made her Majesty an Indian Empress, had advised her to bring over an army of Hindoos to overcome the objection felt to the use of the Imperial title in England; that would be a parallel, though an imperfect one, to the deadly scheme of Strafford for making his master into a despot; and we cannot wonder at the issue.

Physical force in those days played a much larger part than it does now, both in politics, in morals, and even in religion. Public opinion had not volume enough to act except by giving point and power to swords and guns. A man like Strafford could not, in such a time, be paralysed by dismission or disgrace. Hanging about the skirts of the Court, he would have been as dangerous and as intolerable as an infected ox in a farmyard during the prevalence of cattle plague. Imprisonment of such a man would have been as ineffectual as isolation of an infected animal. Exile would have made him a centre of mischief. There was but one possible course. It was not revenge; it was no thirst for blood that kept the Commons immovable in their insistence on his death. It was something nobler than the instinct of self-preservation; it was the deep-rooted conviction that his life meant England's political death.

Yet there is a certain glamour about the memory of every brave, high-spirited man who has heroically met the fate incurred by his daring; and this has invested Strafford with a romance which leads sentimentalists to condemn his execution. But, in truth, it is to the implacable firmness of Strafford's accusers and judges that we owe the facilities we enjoy for indulging in cheap sentiment now. It was too costly then. When chivalrous devotion was claiming for the King power to open every shopman's till and every merchant's strong box, and to take therefrom whatever amount seemed good to him, people found the sentiment of royalism expensive. When every outspoken citizen was liable to the arbitrary penalty of having insolent, drunken soldiers billeted on him, or to

have his own son impressed and sent to herd with the offscouring of gaols and pot-houses, the sentiment of royalism roused more indignation than romantic sympathy. When bishops were in a position to command the civil magistrate, when they could enforce, by the pillory, and the lash, and the hangman's knife, whatever nonsense they chose to endorse in Convocation, the cry of "our glorious constitution in Church and State" was not as harmless as it is now. How strong was the need for some stern lesson as to the real significance of treason may be gathered from the canons passed by Convocation in 1640, in defiance of all constitutional precedent, after the Short Parliament had been dissolved.

Concerning the regal power, the first of these illegal canons declared that "the most high and sacred order of kings is of divine right, being the ordinance of God Himself founded in the prime laws of nature." And further, it went on to assert that "for any persons to maintain . . . under any pretence whatever, any independent co-active power, either papal or popular, whether directly or indirectly . . . is . . . cunningly to overthrow the most sacred office which God Himself hath established, and so is *treasonable* against God as well as the king." "For subjects to bear arms against their king, offensive or defensive, upon any pretence whatsoever, is, at least, to resist powers ordained of God; and though they do not invade, but only resist, St. Paul tells them plainly, 'they shall receive to themselves damnation.'" When such doctrines as these were taught by an authority claiming to wield, and by many believed to wield, the very thunders of

heaven, the members of the Long Parliament would have been base traitors to the trust they had received from the nation if they had not struck with all their might, by every means that the constitution or legitimate opportunity afforded, against the originators, aiders, and abettors of these slavish falsehoods.

The same consideration excuses, if it needs any apology, the special pleading of their declaration that they did not arm against the King of England, but only against that perverse person Charles Stuart, and his malignant advisers. Conservative as they were, like all wise agents of political progress, they wanted evolution not revolution. They knew not the name of the former, though they were unconsciously fighting it out, always taking the line of least resistance; and the line of least resistance lay along the observance of constitutional forms, until at length royal infatuation reduced these to an utter farce.

Therefore it was they so persistently maintained, what indeed all history confirmed, that the framers of statute laws on treason did not and could not mean to make the prime political duty unreasoning obedience to the whims of a single person; or resistance to arbitrary power the deadliest political crime. They insisted that a distinction must needs be drawn between the office and the man; and that the office was defined by laws to which the man could constitutionally be compelled to conform. They urged that the essence of treason was hostility to the functions of the office, an assault on the supreme organ of the national will and national life, an endeavour through an injury in that vital region to subvert the fundamental laws and liberties of the country. And thus though Strafford's

crime was conceived in the interest of Charles Stuart, they condemned and avenged it as high treason against the British Crown.

But obviously such a principle was ominous of a further and more startling application than the attainder of Strafford. What if the man in whom the office vested should prove himself incorrigibly bent upon its perversion and degradation? Was he to be held harmless because antiquated laws confused the permanent executive power of the realm with its temporary impersonation? National history supplied the answer to this question also. It showed that the recreant John had been threatened, and Richard II. been actually visited, with deprivation and deposition, in the one case by the barons, in the other by Parliament. The great council had also been appealed to in the strife of royal houses occasioned by the incompetence of Henry VI. True, there were no clear rules of procedure laid down. Kings were hardly likely to have agreed to statutes prescribing any order for accusation and sentence against themselves or their successors. Their policy naturally was to deepen the sacred mystery of their office, and to assume the case of a traitorous sovereign to be as much beyond mortal provision as a falling sky or an extinguished sun.

Still, the precedents were enough to show that there resided in Parliament extraordinary powers to deal with extraordinary contingencies. A hopelessly incorrigible sovereign could, in case of extreme necessity, be deposed, and the executive authority be transferred to other hands. But beyond this the precedents did not go. No king had ever been brought to formal trial for his offences

against the nation, much less solemnly condemned to the block. The only resource, when the life of a sovereign became incompatible with the safety of the people, had been the hideous, cowardly and execrable expedient of assassination. Now, to the victim, it might seem a matter of indifference whether he were taken away by the secret dagger or the public axe. But not so to the nation responsible. To national morality, to national self-respect, nay, to the robustness of liberty, it makes all the difference in the world whether judgment against a ruler be the work of a sneaking assassin or a public and formal act.

When King Charles at length fell into the hands of his rebels, his only fear was of secret murder. The impossibility of bringing a crowned head to judgment made him otherwise, he thought, an insoluble problem, except on terms of his own. But in this he only showed his incompetence to estimate either the nobility or the daring of the people he had wronged. There were undoubtedly fanatics and cowards in that age, as in this, who, by a stab in the dark, would have shirked the more solemn and arduous path of public justice. But the leaders of the Commonwealth, and notably Oliver Cromwell, shrank from the infamous suggestion, as a man struggling through darkness to light starts from the touch of a slimy snake. Hearing of some such project on the part of gloomy sectaries mad with fanaticism, Cromwell redoubled his vigilance, warned, it is said, the King himself, and wrote to the Parliament that if anything of the kind were done it would be most horrible. Yet why, if death was to be the end, did a secret and a public execution make all the difference between justice and villainy?

Is it necessary to ask? Yes it is, when the progress of science puts such fearful powers of destruction within reach of private malice or individual indignation. In an age when dynamite has become a familiar political engine, when reform betakes itself to the method of murder, when almost every honest agitation against outrageous wrong is polluted by skulking villains who substitute the knife for reason, and the bullet for the ballot, it seems it is necessary to declare that wrong cannot be right, and that individual crime can never do the work of public justice.

Had Charles I. been stabbed in the back in Hampton Court Gardens, instead of being openly beheaded in front of Whitehall, his fate would have taught no other lesson than was taught by the assassination of the second Edward or Richard—the lesson that a master of slaves must take care to keep a firm grip of the whip handle. But his formal trial and condemnation, followed by his public execution by authority of the nation, was a memorable and enduring protest against the old-world notion that treason is a crime possible only to subjects. The difference between a murder and an execution in such a case is simply this: the one is the act of private impulse, the other is the deed of the majority of the people, openly and solemnly accomplished through their representatives. In the latter case the publicity and formality of trial and punishment are the guarantee—imperfect, I own, but still the sole guarantee we can have—that the act is sanctioned by the only ultimate political authority, the majority of the nation.

There is a lesson which the million are very slow to learn; and it is this: that no misrule would long be pos-

sible without at least their tacit sanction. The million are always stronger than officialism, if they will assert themselves. And if they will not do so, they are collectively responsible for the evils under which they suffer. Their tacit sanction may be caused by indifference, by ignorance, or by their divisions. But in any case they are collectively responsible. Their responsibility may be such indeed as to move pity rather than provoke blame. Still, none can save them except themselves. The work of enlightening, organising, and uniting them is laborious and long ; but it is the imperative condition of their salvation. And they who rashly think to quicken popular emancipation by deeds of private violence, only succeed in disordering the march of progress, and in paralysing for a time the vital forces that urge it on.

Besides, it is a principle essential to the security of human society, that no violence shall be allowed to life or property except by sanction of the majority. Any relaxation of this principle runs the risk of turning the body corporate into a mutual assassination society. For if anarchists may blow up republicans, and republicans may stab royalists, and royalists may shoot down both by no other authority than that of a self-appointed committee, the normal condition of mankind must be a sanguinary chaos. It is of no use to urge exceptional cases. Of course every political assassin thinks his case is exceptional. But the only security society can have that it shall remain exceptional is to hunt him down without mercy.

This digression has not led us so far as at first sight may be thought from the condemnation of Charles I. for

high treason. The associates of Eliot and Pym might have assassinated the King just as easily as Felton murdered Buckingham. But even had they wished for Charles's death—which at that time they did not—they would have died a thousand times themselves rather than have stooped to such a crime. They resolved on a braver course. They aroused and organised the people. They got the Long Parliament elected. They determined to have the executive government transferred to their hands. Representing as they did, constitutionally and legally, the majority of the people, they felt themselves justified in repelling force by force. This inevitably brought about a revolution they had never desired, and in the confusion that followed it is of course open to question, whether the executive government established on the ruins of monarchy and Parliament truly represented the majority of the people or not. Milton and Cromwell held that it did, and I am not disposed to put them on one side as perjured witnesses. At any rate the extreme advocates of popular right had grasped executive power, and they resolved that the first use they made of it should be openly and formally to bring the King to trial on the astounding charge of high treason. Charles affected to treat the accusation as ridiculous and self-contradictory. But the grave men who made it were not given to indulging in paradox for its own sake. Their meaning in putting their accusation in that form was probably expressed by Cromwell when he said, as reported by Bishop Burnet, that breach of trust on the part of a King ought to be punished more sternly than any other crime whatsoever. At any rate the dread deed awoke mankind to a new

reading of treason and loyalty; and it is that with which we are now most concerned.

Loyalty means faithfulness to law. Into the question of what constitutes the sanction of law we need not now diverge. Whatever commands, prohibitions, or regulative principles are reasonably regarded as binding on all members of a community in virtue of their common relations, these for our present purpose are law. The man who, apart from mercenary hopes or coward fears, is inwardly impelled to the fulfilment of these claims, is, in the proper sense of the word, loyal. The man who will shirk these claims, if he can do so with safety to purse or skin, is disloyal. I do not think there will be much dispute that this is about what the words *ought* to mean according to their derivation. How, then, did it come to pass that the word *loyal* came to be almost entirely confined to the sentiment of devotion to royalty?

The explanation is very simple. We owe this, as we owe many other things both good and evil, to the feudal system. That system was, as you know, a polity under which the land was held by a hierarchy of lordships, extending through various grades of retainers and tenants-in-chief and barons to the King as lord paramount. Now the moral bond upon which this system depended was the faithfulness of the vassal to his lord. And with the usual instinct of self-preservation, characteristic of social systems no less than of individual organisms, this virtue of faithfulness to the feudal superior was magnified until it seemed the sum of all earthly goodness, and was regarded as absolutely inseparable from piety towards God, who, in fact, was pictured as the supreme liege lord of the

universe. Thus the law that was constantly most conspicuous, and guarded by the most awful penalties, was the law of lord and vassal. So it was that, instead of meaning faithfulness to law in general, loyalty came to mean pre-eminently, and, indeed, almost exclusively, faithfulness to a man. Properly speaking, loyalty was just as much the duty of the lord as of the vassal ; for the law gave to each certain claims on the other. If service was due to the lord, protection and justice were due to the vassal ; and failure on either side was, strictly speaking, disloyalty. But a certain spirit of slavishness, inherent in human nature, always attaches sacredness and awe to the claims of the superior, while those of the inferior are regarded as matters of charity and condescension. So it came to pass that for a vassal to be wanting in duty to his lord was disloyalty or treason. But for a lord to be wanting in duty to his vassal was inhumanity, tyranny, cruelty—if you like—but never treason.

Now, as the feudal system decayed, it did not die away equally in all its parts. Originally the overlordship of the King differed in degree rather than in kind from lesser lordships. And as there was a crime of high treason against the King, so there was a crime of petty treason against any lower feudal superior. For a retainer to compass the death of the lord of the manor was not mere murder ; it was petty treason. But a variety of causes in the history of England and in other feudal countries tended to swallow up all lordships in one. At any rate the overlordship of the King became differentiated from inferior lordships to such an extent that at last it was regarded as an entirely isolated institution, having no

earthly parallel or kindred, divine in its origin and divine in its only analogy. The internecine strife of the old barons during the wars of the Roses so reduced their order both in numbers and power that the Tudors had little difficulty in establishing a despotism such as Englishmen had never before endured. And when Henry VIII. made himself Head of the Church, he accomplished for the Crown a sort of apotheosis, which rendered the sanctions of its authority almost wholly theological, mysterious, and heavenly. Henceforward government by kings was treated as a part of natural law, resting on the same foundation as the government of families by fathers and mothers. A man who disputed it was looked upon as no better than an atheist. All the authority of the established religion fostered the superstition that rebellion is akin to parricide. And the whole prayer-book was compiled on the assumption that the monarchy was no mere expedient of policy, but a thing of miraculous creation, and on the whole more sacred than the ten commandments.

In the time of Charles I. it became absolutely necessary that a decisive blow should be struck at this intolerable superstition. What the Commons desired was to paralyse its malignant influence by insisting that the functions of the Crown should always be discharged by the instrumentality of great officers and advisers, possessing the confidence of the people's representatives. The King's obstinate refusal of this expedient brought things to such a pass that the rough test of physical force had to decide whether Crown or Parliament had the majority of the nation at their back. But when this had been settled in favour of Parliament, it was impossible that the King

should keep his throne. Tedious and futile negotiations with that view only served to make that impossibility palpable. Strange though it may appear to hasty readers of history, the victorious army itself was desirous of a rehabilitation of the Crown. One of the earliest declarations in which the soldiery gave tokens of the anomalous part they were afterwards to play, expressly stated as one of their desires the restoration of the King to his legitimate place in the constitution. With this view they entertained emissaries of the Court, and, through representative officers, held conferences with Charles himself. But when twelve months of circumlocution and hypocrisy in high places had convinced them that they were being cozened by their old enemy the Priest in his new style of Presbyter, they had many searchings of heart. After much self-examination, they came to the conclusion that they had been abandoning the path of duty for one of wordly policy. They reproached themselves with "those cursed, carnal conferences" with the King and his party. They began to think that if the monarch had not been within his right, then he had committed an unpardonable crime in wasting the land with a dreadful war through sheer perversity, aggravated by incurable treachery; and, therefore, they resolved "to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed, and mischief he had done to his utmost against the Lord's cause and people in these poor nations."

"The Lord's cause and people!" There is a puritanic twang in this phrase which repels men of a secular temper, and prevents their appreciating its real significance. But, indeed, party names and catch-words vary from age to age

much more than the real human interest they represent. Theological ideas and supernatural sanctions had a far larger place in men's thoughts during the seventeenth century than they have now ; but the political, the moral, and the intellectual issues represented by them were very much the same as those that interest us. The *political* issue lay between government by prerogative or privilege on the one hand, and government by the majority on the other. Now, that is still the case with us. The *moral* issue lay between an old world ecclesiasticism on the one hand, and the independent moral aspirations of an awakened people on the other. Perhaps *that* issue is not quite worked out by us even yet. The *intellectual* issue lay between bondage under a hierarchy, and freedom of thought and speech. We have made more progress in settling this question than either of the others. But there remains something to be desired even here.

At all events, if we look in this light at the strife of Royalists, Presbyterians, Independents, Levellers, and fanatics, we shall realise that, notwithstanding many enormous differences, they were "our own flesh and blood." If we were to describe them by modern names, we should say that the Royalists were the Tories, the Presbyterians were the Whigs, the Independents were the advanced Liberals, the Levellers were the Radicals, and the miscellaneous fanatics were the Anarchists of that day. All the latter parties had been united against the Royalists, and had therefore conquered. Dissensions then sprang up which need not concern us now. But it is clear that what the soldiers meant, in the language just now quoted, by "the Lord's cause and his people in these poor

nations," was the principle and the party of self-government against prerogative, of a purer popular life against an effete ecclesiasticism, of freedom of conscience against priestly domination. In the memorable prayer-meeting at Windsor the Independent soldiers awoke to the conviction that the principle and the party—"the Lord's cause and his people"—deserved a devotion intolerant of compromise, and distrustful of all worldly intrigue.

Try to fancy them at their prayers in that critical time, March, 1648, when Royalist Wales and canny Scotland threatened to snatch victory from their hands. The tedious and fruitless efforts to reconcile an impracticable King and bigoted Presbyters with the new settlement earned by blood had wearied out these men. Their faith was shaken, their consciences were troubled, their devotions had lost fervour; they longed for fresh inspiration, and, as was their custom, they sought it not in any cathedral choir nor saintly shrine, but in the contact of heart with heart, and soul with soul in the adoration of supreme justice and truth. Imagine, then, these grizzled veterans, scarred with wounds, roughened with exposure, each man with a prophetic light gleaming in his eyes, as hour after hour and day after day they went back upon the past and besought Eternal Light to reveal the sin that had paralysed their spiritual joy and zeal. Then the thought fell upon them, like a flash of revelation, that they had been making their sacred cause a matter of bargain and compromise. Well might they lose faith since they had lost simplicity. God had given victory, not to diplomatic wiles or ecclesiastical intrigue, but to the bold assertion of popular rights, and the claims of the individual conscience. Since

they had begun to smooth down and explain away these sacred rights in the interest of King, Priest, or Presbyter, there was little wonder that their souls were sick and the great cause threatened with ruin. The whole secret lay in "those cursed, carnal conferences," and "their own conceited wisdom." And we can fancy the grim gladness that lightened those stern faces and sounded in jubilant thanksgiving, as these men resolved henceforward to know nothing but "the cause of the Lord and of his people in these poor nations."

Now the point on which I desire to fix attention is the striking contrast between the devotion of these men and the personal sentiment termed "loyalty." The emotion stirring them was deeper and vaster, the object of their aspiration far nobler and more real, than anything the religion of royalism could afford. Not the supposed rights of one man, but the freedom, purity, and happiness of "these poor nations" were the inspirations of their zeal; and, though they did not use the word, this was their notion of true loyalty. For, as they held it treason to betray the nation in the interest of the King, so they lived, and fought, and suffered, and triumphed in the faith that the true loyalty is devotion to the law of a people's progress.

It is time to draw these reflections to their final issue. The struggles of the English Commonwealth remind us that beneath the statutes of treason lies a moral truth too great and fundamental to be expressed in any Act of Parliament. We are all members one of another, and each owes fealty to the social organism of which he is a part. Those who are set in high places, whether magis-

trate or King, exist for the social organism, and not this for them. To the executive government loyalty is due, not for its own sake, but because it represents, at least for the time, the demands of the body corporate upon us. And, if you will consider loyalty in this aspect as the due of the living part to the living whole, you will, perhaps, see reason to assign it more than a political importance, as possibly even to recognise in it the practical bond of all morality.

For the root sentiment of morality I take to be a sense of the claims incumbent upon us by the mere fact of our forming part of an ordered universe.

“‘Tis the sublime in man,
Our noontide majesty to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole.
This fraternises man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings.”

Look at it in this way, and think of it afterwards if the words seem meaningless to you on first hearing. The law of each separate being is the sum of the demands imposed upon it by its relations to all the rest. This is only another way of saying that environment determines evolution. But environment must be taken in a very large sense. As is beautifully said by Mr. Rhys Davids,* the snowdrop bends just so far and no farther on its stem, because it is balanced by the weight of the universe. The law of each separate being, then, the prescription of what it shall become and do, is fixed by the sum of the

* Hibbert Lectures on Buddhism.

demands imposed upon it by its relations to all the rest. In a conscious being the willing and hearty response to these claims is the emotion properly called loyalty. "Emotion," I say; for, after all, it is chiefly concerned with the affections, and any heroic claim upon it always kindles it into an emotion. Herein lies the compelling power of loyalty. See how strong it is where the mutual relations involved are concentrated in form and easily grasped. In a trades' union the idea of a common interest (commonwealth), however favourable it may be to class selfishness, entirely subordinates individual interests. Where the notion of loyalty to the union has thoroughly taken root, a man will face want and suffering rather than use his skill for his own advantage at the risk of imperilling the common aims. Indeed, it seems to me that the moral results of trades' unions, in the subordination of the one to the many, and the cultivation of loyalty to the organic whole of which we form a part, are more valuable far than any gain in wages or hours of labour.

The action of the sentiment in the case of trades' unions has, of course, not been infallible, and it has sometimes been directed to unwise ends. But the mistaken direction has commonly arisen, not from any vice in this sentiment of loyalty, but from its imperfect development. It has not always appreciated the fact that there exist wider claims modifying these narrower ones of class or trade, and making still higher demands on loyalty. A member of a trades' union is also a citizen, a man, a creature of the universe; and in none of these relations ought he to forget what is demanded from him in others.

The intensity possible to the sentiment is, however, best illustrated on the narrower scale. How noble and touching, for instance, is the mutual devotion of a well-disciplined ship's company in time of danger! Not every man for himself is the rule in such a case, but each for all. Every one has a station, every man a duty. It may be that in sticking to these lies his best chance of ultimate safety. But such reasoning has no conscious place when the ship is going down, and black death threatens every post alike. Common service, common dangers, bring common duty; and unfaithfulness to this through selfish fears is felt to be disloyalty unworthy of a man.

I believe that this is a principle capable of indefinite extension. Although most readily realised with distinctness on a narrow scale, where common interests are most easily interpreted, it really lies at the basis of every case in which moral duty can be predicated. The law of any whole necessarily involves the law of the parts composing it; and, in the last result, this is the everlasting sanction of morality. Right and wrong may be defined from many different standpoints; but, in any case, the previous question arises: Why am I inwardly bound to do right and avoid wrong? That question demands an answer, whether you define right as the will of God, or as the law of nature, or as the ultimately useful. Let it be granted that right actions are those which make for the greatest good of the greatest number. Yes; but why should I care for that? The answer to this question must be really the key to all morality. And it must be an answer appealing to instincts engendered in us by essential conditions of our origin and existence. Now, I maintain

that such an answer is given by our instinctive recognition of the bond of loyalty, that binds us to any legitimate or real whole of which we form a part. That organic whole may be a trades' union, a municipality, a political party, a nation, a race, humanity. In the last result we are living parts of a living universe, its laws working in and through us. In so far as we have discovered the line of development imposed on our race as a growing element in the universe, we know to that extent what is required of humanity; and private duty is involved in this. If, then, I am asked why I feel bound to do what is right, I reply: I am bound by loyalty to that universal onward moving Life which is manifested infinitesimally in me. All sanctions of every religion that ever was revealed or invented are translateable into terms of this principle.

The sum of the matter is this. Loyalty is willing devotion to the law of a larger whole. Political loyalty is faithfulness to the Commonwealth to which we belong. Loyalty to the sovereign has, of course, its proper place in respect for the dignitary to whom the nation, by its traditions and its statutes, entrusts supreme executive powers. But the claim which most completely unites grandeur of scope with intimacy of relation, and interest in duty, is the demand made upon us for loyal service to the generation into which we are born.

LECTURE III.

THE LIMITS OF MORAL FORCE.

I HAD better begin by defining what I mean by moral force, and what by physical. You will scarcely require any scientific definition. We are only concerned that we should understand each other in this and the succeeding lecture. The very fact that we are going to use the phrases popularly, without any pretence to metaphysical exactness, makes it all the more necessary to state, as well as we can, the range within which we allow ourselves the use of the terms in question.

You will see the necessity for attention to this point, if you reflect that, properly speaking, physical force acts only on matter, and moral force only on the affections or conscience. Even logic may have no moral force in this strict sense, because, as in mathematical demonstration, it may appeal only to the intellect, and not at all to the moral faculties. Nevertheless, in ordinary speech we should certainly include under the head of moral force whatever makes intellectual conviction resistless. We talk indeed of moral probability as distinguished from mathematical certainty. But that sort of probability does not always include a moral element. It may be simply the balance of evidence as appreciable by pure intellect. In brief, and speaking roughly, then, we mean by moral force any influence that impresses conviction on the mind,

and effects consentient action in another by its appeal to the affections, or the conscience.

By consentient action I mean an act performed with the hearty concurrence of the person convinced or persuaded. This is a very necessary element in the popular understanding of moral force. "A man convinced against his will," says the common adage, "is of the same opinion still." The saddest illustration of this is the case of Galileo, who, under threat of the direst penalties, and probably under the immediate alternative of torture, was constrained to recant his wicked heresy about the fixity of the sun, and the movement of the earth. Tradition will have it, that, after uttering the recantation aloud, the astronomer muttered beneath his breath, "*e pur si muove*" — "it moves for all that." I confess I should be sorry to think this tradition true. For it always appears to me to add to the humiliation of a strong intellect, disarmed by a weakness which we hesitate whether to call physical or moral. If you call it physical weakness, what sort of strength was it which enabled young girls, in times of persecution, to endure torture for days in succession, and to die triumphant at the last? If this was moral strength, then the absence of it must be moral weakness. On the other hand, no one would say that Galileo was overcome by moral force. Although, so far as we know, the rack was never applied to him, still, the fact of his imprisonment, and the threats used against him, justify us in saying that he was the victim of physical force. Yet it was physical force of such a kind that the moral power we admire in apostles and martyrs would have overcome.

It is obvious that there is a confusion here. For, so far

as I know, moral force and physical force can never directly meet or grapple except in the mysterious effect of a man's own will on his own muscles. The truth is, the threats to which Galileo succumbed were, after all, of the nature of moral force, because they produced their effects by terror. But in popular usage they are included under the head of physical force. If a burglar awakes you in the middle of the night, and, presenting a pistol at your head, demands your plate basket, you can of course refuse if you like. If you would rather part with your life than with your spoons you have only to say so, and you can have your choice. Supposing you to succumb, it is the moral influence of the terror of death that affects you; or, as in such a case, we should all rather express it—a rational preference of life. Still, no one would hesitate to say that this is a case of yielding to physical force. On the other hand, I have read somewhere of a gentleman, who, on being surprised at night in a similar manner, entered into a discussion with the burglar as to the reasons for such an untimely visit. Being convinced that this was a first crime, and caused by distress, the intended victim dressed himself, gave the burglar a good supper, and then accompanied him to his wretched lodging, to verify the story told. This was clearly a case of moral force, although it is doubtful whether, if the gentleman had met the burglar as a beggar in the street, the tale would have been equally effectual.

From all this you will see clearly the importance of that element of consistency which I have named as distinctive of the effect of moral power. When, in questions of human organisation, we speak of physical force, we do not

necessarily mean handcuffs or fetters ; we mean any kind of pressure or threat which is ominous in the last result of physical penalties, and which secures obedience without consentiency or sympathy on the part of the subject. On the other hand, when we speak of moral force, we do not necessarily exclude all reference to possible physical consequences. If we did, we should have to put out of sight the laws of the universe, which are, after all, the most solemn object of moral consideration. The distinctive feature of moral influence is consentiency on the part of those affected. But this again must not be interpreted too narrowly. A man often says that he consents unwillingly, when what he means is not at all that he surrenders free agency, but only that a consideration of the whole case overcomes his hitherto predominant inclination.

For an example of government by physical force, we may point to Russia. At least nine-tenths of the eighty millions or so forming the population of that empire are in a condition of comparative barbarism ; and they provide the resources of brute force by which the remaining portion of the people are bound and gagged. The educated minority are compelled to external obedience ; but the degree of consentiency secured may be measured by the omnipresence, the persistency, and the bitterness of Nihilism. On the other hand, it must not be assumed that government by physical force is exclusively characteristic of despotism. The shortcomings of the French Revolution as a movement of reform were largely due to the supersession of moral development by spasmodic violence. In the great democracy of America, the rule of the slaveholders was maintained, in direct defiance of the

nation's better instincts, by the brute force always at the command of the prejudices of race, not only in the South, but in the North. And the tragic fall of slavery strikingly illustrated the words of sacred Wisdom, that "all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword."

For an exemplification of moral force I might refer to the spread of Christianity, or of Buddhism. Or I might point to the modern growth of toleration, and the peaceful victories of reform. But particular illustrations will most opportunely occur to us in dealing with the sources of popular enthusiasm. At present I rather take the more general case of ordinary public opinion. It is a vague term; but, I suppose, we mean by it the preponderant tendency of a great community to approve certain lines of conduct or certain types of character, and to disapprove of others. Public opinion is far from being an infallible guide, and the essential glory of the martyr is that he is strong enough and brave enough to defy it. Still, by hypothesis, it shares the progress of humanity. It is always improving from age to age; and, after all, the million must be content to move on with it.

Do not, however, confound public opinion with the gregarious instincts of a herd of deer or a pack of wolves. They run all one way because they cannot help themselves. They have no more choice in the matter than the separate drops of water that rush to form Niagara Falls. Similarly, in human societies of a very low type, there may be gregarious instincts, but you can hardly say there is public opinion. The savage distorts his ears or lips, and dances his war dance, and scalps his foe, not because he follows public opinion in any proper sense of the word;

he does so because he is scarcely a separate individual at all, but rather like an undistinguished cell in a huge organism, everywhere permeated by the same blind impulses. Public opinion is the resultant of innumerable conflicting individual opinions. Hence, where there is no individual opinion, there cannot be what we mean by public opinion. And this is by no means an idle distinction. It helps us to understand history better, and it also points to universal education as the surest means for the further evolution of opinion. Public opinion began to exist so soon as individual men dared to differ from each other, and to argue out their differences. It grew in importance and power, just as men's separate opinions were based on wider knowledge, and expression became more free. Before the age of printing it can hardly be said to have existed at all amongst the masses. It acquired vaster proportions as knowledge permeated the bases of society, and the means of intercourse were multiplied. It is growing into grandeur in our own day. It is destined yet not only to secure order without violence in separate communities, but also to displace the sword and gun in the settlement of international differences.

Public opinion acts by the pressure it brings to bear on the individual through his sympathies, through his love of approbation; and, above all, through that true loyalty, of which we spoke in the last lecture as binding the living part to the living whole. It prevails not by compulsion, but by persuasion, by securing the consentiency of the personal will to the impersonal, or rather supra-personal, power of the majority.

There is, indeed, a different method occasionally adopted by public opinion on a narrow scale, a method which transfers it from the category of moral force as here defined, to that of physical force. It is known by various names—in the Church by excommunication, in juvenile social circles by that of “sending to Coventry,” and in Ireland by that of “boycotting.” This kind of exclusion from social intercourse and sympathy is, indeed, capable of various degrees, and my remarks do not apply to all of them. But the mediæval excommunication and the modern “boycotting” are merely a disguise for physical deprivation and penalty so severe, and even cruel, that they have no fair claim to be considered moral forces at all, and ought to be counted with the thumbscrew and the rack. They produce no conviction, they secure no consistency on the part of the obnoxious person. They lack the freedom, the light, the delicate touch, the intangible, yet all-embracing grasp of public opinion. They are more akin to the action of a herd of beasts, which, with horn and hoof, drive a diseased member out of the common pasture. In proportion as education spreads, and as the significance of liberty, equality, and fraternity is better understood, it will be increasingly acknowledged that such methods have the mark of the beast, and belong to the barbarisms of the past. I have now defined the two classes of force, and I proceed to discuss them.

We have arrived at a period in the progress of civilisation when it seems very necessary to form a more careful estimate than we have hitherto done of the correlative provinces of moral and physical force in the conflicts out

of which a more complex order and a profounder security are always emerging. Men's ideas about the limits to the value of each are perpetually changing, and, if a sufficiently wide range of view be taken, I think it will be recognised that the changes are permanently in one direction. We "move upwards, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die." Nevertheless some curious vacillations take place, and they have been specially observable within our own life-time. Thus whenever the carelessness of society encourages the activity of garotters or burglars, straightway there is a panic, and a demand for a vigorous employment of the lash. Amongst the prosperous fogeydom that fills the first-class carriages of suburban trains, there is a remarkable unanimity in the conviction that everything disagreeable to their worship could be "put down" as they phrase it, and ought to be put down, and would be put down, were it not for the mawkish sentimentality of prevalent liberalism. And in their view the process of putting down is so simple and obvious, that nothing but canting hypocrisy or cowardice, on the part of the powers that be, can account for the prevalence of disorder. Their prescription is simple. Blood and iron for Russia and Egypt, the gallows for sedition mongers, the cat-o'-nine-tails for soldiers and thieves and wife beaters, martial law for Ireland—such are the means which they consider dictated by sturdy common sense for putting all things to rights.

Eight years ago the Jingo fever was beginning to throb in British blood. At that time Lord Derby spoke, as he often does, words of wisdom which deserve to be recalled. "I know," he said, "there are persons at the present day

who laugh at the notion of moral influence in public affairs, and regard material strength as the sole element of international power. I object to that view, not because it is cynical, as people sometimes say, but because it is inaccurate. You cannot in public, any more than in private, do violent and aggressive acts without inspiring distrust ; and to inspire distrust is a source of weakness." But the men of gunpowder and glory treated all such wisdom as mere platitude. Make yourself feared, they said, and then it does not matter whether you are distrusted or not.

Now what is the reason of the periodical reaction we have witnessed against the growing confidence in moral power ? I believe it has arisen in a great measure from a mistaken idea of what was to be expected from moral force. Men have looked that it should work miracles, and, when it crept along with the provoking slowness of all vital processes, they have become impatient, and clamoured for some shorter and easier method. If we consider better what we may reasonably expect from it, and why it works so slowly, we might at least learn a lesson of patience. And if we learn at the same time that there are occasions when the last issue between order and anarchy must be staked on the triumph of physical force, we should also see how precarious and temporary is such a decision, until confirmed by the ripened moral sense of the community.

In studying the rise and fall of the English Commonwealth we have to face two pregnant facts. One is the enormous power of the moral impulse stirring the nation at that time ; the other is the failure of that moral impulse to achieve its aim except by the sanguinary and hateful method of civil war. How far even such dreadful means

were successful will be a subject for consideration in another lecture. But meantime let us realise the full significance of the contrast I have mentioned. Bear in mind that the uprising against Charles I., Strafford, and Laud had characteristics not to be paralleled in any previous civil conflict recorded in our history. Had it been merely a conflict between rival dynasties, or only a resistance to unjust pecuniary exactions, or exclusively a vindication of constitutional freedom, there would have been no such incongruity as I have noted between impulse and method. Swords and guns used to be the natural and inevitable instruments of decision in such cases. But it was not so. Neither ship-money nor forced loans, nor even invasions of Parliamentary privilege would have sufficed to engender that white heat of sacred wrath in which the Commons of England chose the curse of civil war rather than the damnation of surrender. All such considerations played a large part in the policy of the time. But the temper in which they were met, which nerved for the battle, and determined the issue, was formed by widely different inspirations.

The typical man of the age—the great Oliver—had a very practical mind, and was fully alive to the importance both of finance and of equal law. But to suppose that his indignation was chiefly moved by secular misgovernment would be to betray utter ignorance both of the man and of his time. His notion of an ideal state of society was expressed for him, as it has been for millions, by the significant name “the kingdom of God.” The law by which this ideal order was to be maintained was the Divine Will regarded as revealed in the Bible. The executive power

of this law was to be sought in the free consent of emancipated souls. The force by which the kingdom was to be established was the energy of the Divine Word, pressed home by the inspirations of an Eternal Spirit. The whole scope of such a theory of life lies in the realm of moral convictions and moral forces alone. Now that such a reformer should, in middle life, have been turned into a man of war, and should have taken to trampling down all opposition under the hoofs of his victorious cavalry, ought, surely, to be suggestive of some fruitful reflections. It is always humiliating, in some sense, for a high moral purpose to be driven to rude and clumsy physical methods for the attainment of its ends. Whether in this case the fault lay with the reforming impulse or the medium of resistance is, of course, open to discussion.

Let us begin with poor King Charles ; for he affords in himself a conspicuous illustration of the personal characteristics which in obscurer but multitudinous instances perpetually baffle the expected operation of moral forces. Making all allowance for the narrow limits of his understanding, yet, surely, when his first Parliamentary troubles began, it might have been expected that any one with the least vestige of sanity left would have felt that the case was, as we should say in these days, pre-eminently one for compromise. During the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, and throughout the reign of King James, the House of Commons had shown a constantly increasing boldness. It was the sort of boldness that inspires a representative body when it is conscious of a strong public opinion behind it. This sturdiness of sentiment was in great measure due to the deeper earnestness engendered by the Puritanic view

of life. And whatever might be the limits of Charles's understanding, he had shown that he could appreciate very well the value of this popular impulse when he could make it subservient to his own purposes.

For shortly before the death of his father, when, as Prince of Wales, he returned with chafed temper and wounded vanity from his mad-cap expedition to Spain in search of a bride, he appealed, quite like a man of the people, to certain members of the Commons to aid him in exacting vengeance. He knew he could count on Puritanic hatred of Spain as the stronghold of the Inquisition, and in his eagerness he did not scruple to add that by a vigorous prosecution of this quarrel the Commons would bind him to them for ever. Any one who should have predicted that this young man would for twenty-one years oppose an impracticable resistance to the very energies which he now summoned to his aid, and would ruin himself and his country through blindness to their invincible power, would have appeared singularly wanting both in judgment and sympathy. Making all allowance for the arrogance and self-will naturally produced by his education, it might fairly be expected that Charles would recognise the incongruity of a Tudor despotism with the developed state of opinion, and would keep what he could by hastening to surrender what he clearly could *not*.

There were two reasons for the failure of the force of opinion in the case of Charles. The first was the total want of any common ground between him and the representatives of opinion, and the second was his own abnormal incapacity for loyalty.

Given a sufficient rigidity in the lever, the whole power of

the instrument depends on the security of the fulcrum. The fulcrum is, as it were, the point at which the force applied and the force to be overcome appeal to common ground in mother earth. The common ground is immovable, and whichever contending force can make the best use of that will conquer the other. But where there is no common ground there is no fulcrum, and the lever is impossible. So it is with the action of moral force. Whether the operation is argument or persuasion or inspiration, there must be some truth, or some aim, or some sentiment common to both sides; otherwise moral force is inapplicable. "One must live," said the doubtful trader; "I do not at all see the necessity," said the moralist; "on the contrary, we must all die." "But," said the doubtful trader, "that is precisely what I want to avoid." In such a case it is obvious enough that the want of a common ground would make persuasion impossible.

The case was somewhat similar between Charles and the public opinion of the time. He inherited, through his mingled Tudor and Stuart blood, a self-will and vanity which had been flattered and deceived by the courtly preaching of those days on the subject of divine right. He was not a bad man in the sense of being vicious or dissolute. He really wished to act as a father to his people, but only on condition that his indefeasible rights were absolutely admitted. To him monarchy was not a matter of accident or expediency; it was a law of nature as much as the supremacy of the sun over the planets. On the other hand, partly through the independence that often springs from earnest religious conviction, and partly through the influence of Coke, Selden, and other students

of constitutional precedent, his subjects had come to the conclusion that such claims on the part of the Crown were a modern innovation, that the old monarchy of England was limited by dependence upon the Commons for supplies of money, and that the Royal assent to their advice on affairs of the realm might lawfully be made a condition of yielding supplies. The very fact of the encroachments that had been made during the last hundred years rendered it all the more necessary that they should make a stand now against despotic interpretations of the monarchy, or they might for ever lose their chance of doing so. The notion of violence did not at this time enter their heads. But they knew their own minds, and believed that if they only stuck to their purpose the King must yield.

It is very well for us that he did not. Had he done so, there might have been handed down to our day constitutional anomalies far more dangerous than the House of Lords. But the reason why he did not yield was that his thoughts, and ideas, and aims moved in a different plane from the opinion of his times, and between him and his Parliament there was no common ground. The same thing was unfortunately true in a somewhat different sense of Cromwell and his Parliaments. But here other relations were reversed. Cromwell was stronger than any of his Parliaments, whereas Charles was weaker than his, though he did not know it till the issue was tried. Thus, in Cromwell's relation to his Parliaments, we shall find an illustration of the failure of physical force to enlarge the limits of moral power—a much more complicated case than the one we are considering. At present we have to do with the simpler issues between Charles and his people.

wherein the superior moral power, baffled of its legitimate victory, was driven into war.

How entirely he misread the situation was seen very early in his reign. Incensed by the remonstrance of his second Parliament against the sacrifice of their religion and their resources to the pampered Buckingham, the foolish monarch wrote:—"I must let you know that I will not allow any of my servants to be questioned amongst you, much less such as are of eminent place and near unto me. The old question was what shall be done unto the man whom the king will honour? But now it hath been the labour of some to seek what may be done against him whom he thinks fit to honour. . . . I wish you would hasten my supplies, or else it will be worse for yourselves; for, if any ill happen, *I think I shall be the last that shall feel it.*" How could such a man be expected to realise the moral forces making against arbitrary power? Similarly, in reply to remonstrances against illegal imprisonment, he either was, or affected to be, incapable of believing that his faithful Commons really meant to touch his prerogative. He thought it must be amply satisfactory to them to know that in no case would any man be arbitrarily imprisoned, unless the King thought he had sufficient reason for acting in an arbitrary manner.

The case was the same with his ecclesiastical notions. He had no conception of the earnestness of conviction with which these men demanded respect for the democratic conscience. He counted himself a religious man, and, in a sense, he was so—that is, he had great reverence for the Unseen Powers, whom he believed to be on the

side of authority. But the first law of God, in his view, was obedience to the powers that be ; hence he could not conceive the religion which led vulgar subjects to appeal to God in support of claims against their King. In a word, there was no common ground, no fulcrum by which moral force could be made effectual, and the Long Parliament had not sat a year before it became plain that the alternative lay between submission and civil war.

But even when the dread appeal to the sword had decided the issue in their favour, still it was impossible to bind this King ; and that for the second reason we have given : his abnormal incapacity for loyalty. What we mean by this loyalty has already been explained. It is faithfulness to the law of any whole to which we belong as parts. Whatever might be Charles' incapability of understanding Puritan religion or politics, at least he could appreciate the physical force which revolutionised the relation of Crown and Commons. If he had then frankly and faithfully accepted the situation, there is no doubt that he might have retained his throne. But he had no notion of accepting the situation. With conceited confidence in his own cunning, he sought to play off the Presbyterians against the Independents, and made promises —now to the one party, now to the other—with the palpable intention of deceiving both. And it was this incorrigible disloyalty that brought him to his doom.

But unfortunately it was not only in the case of Charles I. and the Royalists that the moral force of the Puritans failed to achieve a triumph without the help of coarser weapons. It failed also in the issue between the Presbyterians and Independents. The Scotch may fairly

be credited with a considerable amount of personal devotion to the dynasty they had given to England. Still, if the English Parliament would have consented to enthrone the Presbytery as lords paramount over conscience, I think we may safely say there would have been no renewal of civil war. Now, here it cannot be said that there was no common ground on which a basis for friendly argument might have been found. Still less could either party be charged with Charles' regardlessness of compacts; but, in this case, an element of time has to be considered, which is another point in estimating the limits of moral force. The claim for freedom of thought and opinion and speech was a startling novelty in those days. Even the Independents advanced it in a hesitating, imperfect fashion, and time was needed to think it out. Some of the very men who condemned the Presbyterian demand for uniformity of belief and worship, themselves clamoured for barbarous and cruel penalties on Quakers and Socinians. If some strong power could have held the hands of both parties, and debarred them from recourse to any but moral arguments, the interchange of logic, freely peppered with abuse, but modified by the necessities of social contact, would in time have brought the opposing factions to see, as they have done since, that neither were such bad fellows after all, and that they might rub along comfortably with a little bearing and forbearing.

For a few brief years Oliver tried to play this part of "a good constable," as he said; but that was after the sword had made the Independents paramount. In the interim the sharpness and urgency of the issue gave no time for the

slow action of moral forces. It required more than a few years, it needed several generations, to give victory by consent of their opponents to the principles of the Independent army. But the circumstances of the crisis required that the question should receive at least a temporary settlement at once ; and, as the Presbyterians had virtually the warlike Scots at their back, a fresh appeal to arms was inevitable.

In our time we often grumble because all questions of reform are not settled in a single Parliamentary Session. To go on enduring for ten or twenty years a political abuse or anomaly, which no one any longer defends on grounds of reason, appears a heavy tax to pay for the continuity of our institutions. But this we ought to bear in mind—that the tax is paid, not merely for the continuity of our institutions, but for deliverance from the rude and dreadful judgment of the sword. It is for the supremacy of moral force in our political development that we are called upon to make the sacrifice ; and they who reflect what this signifies, will not hesitate about the value of the compensation. More than once, even in the present century, threats have been made to give sudden ripeness to public opinion by the thunder-heat of war. In 1832, at the final crisis of the great Reform Bill, these threats were no idle vapours. Indignation at the fatuous obstinacy of the Peers had wrought public anger to such a pitch of excitement that many cool observers expected a civil conflict. Had it broken out, I think there is a good reason for believing that victory would in the end have declared for the popular side. In the absence of railways and electric telegraphs, the forces at the command of the

Government could not possibly have quelled at once the simultaneous rising of every great centre of population. And if once the struggle had assumed the proportions of war, the difficulty of collecting taxes and paying troops would, as in the seventeenth century, have gradually transferred material superiority from a nominal authority over national resources to a real command of popular enthusiasm.

The result would have been a far more revolutionary reform than the one actually effected. It is very unlikely that the House of Lords would have survived; the Church would at any rate have been brought more directly under popular control, and most probably a large portion of its revenues would soon have been diverted to secular uses. The machinery of legislation, in fact, would have been brought into nearer communication with popular impulse, and many reforms for which we are now weary of waiting, as the rescue of the national land from private abuses, the abolition of the game laws, and the establishment of free common schools open to all, would have been carried long ago.

Yes; but look at the other side of the account. After passing through such a flame, our country would have been a mere burnt cinder, instead of the emporium of the world. A giant Commonwealth like the United States, still throbbing with the intense vitality of childhood, may endure a civil war and come out of it purified, but unscathed. Our older and more complex civilisation could not bear such a strain without risk of collapse. Our manufactures and commerce, just at the crisis of their supreme development, must needs have been driven to

other shores. An impoverished people would have had to choose between a crushing debt and the disgrace of repudiation. The land question would have settled itself without the aid of a reformed Parliament; for estates would have been almost worthless. And in addition to this material ruin, there would have been the moral disorder and wretchedness caused by family divisions and cruel losses, and reverse of fortune, besides the bitterness of parties and the terror of reaction, that must have haunted us to the present time. The action of moral forces may be provokingly slow; but the only other alternative is so terrible that even the triumph of the Independent army is a warning to all time.

We have seen how the action of moral force is limited by the want of a common ground of appeal, and also by conditions of time. Another cause of disappointment is the disproportion too often existing between intellectual apprehension and moral grasp of a question. Intellectual apprehension sees what the solution ought to be, but moral grasp feels that this it must and shall be. Intellectual apprehension feels about the outside of a question, and is capable of detaching it entirely from collateral issues. Moral grasp gets at the heart of it, and feels instinctively its ulterior bearings. Hence it often happens that the practical settlement of social and political issues is left to men distinguished much more by moral vigour than by intellectual largeness of view. Idolaters of culture often regret that the religious reformation was left in the hands of Martin Luther instead of Erasmus. But it could not be otherwise. The intellect of Erasmus saw indeed clearly enough, perhaps more clearly than Luther, the

causes of Church corruption ; and he would have been glad to see them taken away. But he did not feel the question to be a burning fire consuming him inwardly, so that he could find no relief but in reform. Again, Erasmus would have been quite satisfied had the discipline of the Church been improved, and some glaring absurdities removed from its services and creeds. But Luther, seizing the heart of the question in the fallibility of Pope and Councils, would hear of no settlement other than the adoption of a new infallible standard in the Bible. It is very likely that a reformation guided by Erasmus would in the issue have led more directly to the total elimination of infallibility than did the Lutheran movement. But it would have done so in the interest of the intellect, not of the heart ; and, after all, the heart is the larger part of man. I believe it is the heart more than the intellect which makes the present day rebellion against infallibility so general. It is this that makes religion safe. But religion will be saved at the expense of long delays and logical imperfection in every step of reformation.

Now recall the composition of the original Parliamentary party, which resisted Charles I. before there was any talk of war. Lord Falkland saw clearly enough the wrong-headedness of the King and his advisers. But formal concessions would have satisfied him, because he had no moral grasp of the real issue between loyalty to the Crown and loyalty to the nation. The Calvinists were more imperious, for they were determined upon a logical remodelling of Church and State as nearly as possible on the pattern of Geneva. But the conflict begun by them turned out to be a struggle of human nature for natural

freedom, independently of any theory ; and for this they had no heart. The younger Vane, Ludlow, and the Republicans generally, had an ideal, classical in its origin, complete in itself, and only unfortunate in being totally unadapted to the country and the age. Cromwell and his Independents, on the other hand, had but little theory to boast of. But they felt inwardly that the need of the time was the union of an enlarged freedom with greater security for order. They believed that all they wanted could be secured by freedom of religion, a better representative body, improved national finance, cheap law, and more effective municipal institutions. In the main they were right, as after-experience has proved. But for the time they were entirely baffled by the elements of division amongst their allies. They were alone in the moral grasp they had of the practical issue for the time.

These reflections on the past would have comparatively little interest for us here were it not for their obvious bearing on the present and the future. We very frequently hear from earnest workers in the cause of progress bitter complaints and lamentations over the unreason, and the prejudice, and the selfishness, and the factiousness prevalent in the field of their labour. One man finds a political club, and after a few months' experience is ready to abandon it in disgust, because his fellow-members care for nothing but billiards, and drinking, and smoking. Another starts a Liberal Association, and, after a while, withdraws in despair because no one will work but himself. A third organises a Youths' Institute, and is annoyed to find that French and German, and political economy are not so attractive as novel-reading and dominoes. On a

wider scale we hear reformers complain, and not without reason, that the million are careless of any but temporary interests, unconscious of their own power, impatient of organisation, easily beguiled by charlatans.

But patience, friends, patience! Moral force does not pretend to work miracles. The ignorance and neglect of ages are not to be remedied in a day, nor even in a single generation. Others before you had to complain of just the same discouragements, and yet the good cause has slowly won its way after all. Think only with what a heavy heart the disbanded Ironsides went back to their homes through towns and villages wild with a short-lived revelry. They found themselves the song of drunkards, the butt of every tavern lounger, whose sole contribution to his country's glory was a hiccuped attempt at the refrain of—"The king shall enjoy his own again." Might not such men naturally think that all was lost—that their comrades had died, and they had shed their blood, in vain? Yet many of them lived to see the country rise up once more, and fling off the intolerable Stuarts for ever. They lived to see endorsed permanently in the statute book the principle for which they had fought, that the nation is master of its own destinies, and that the deepest treason is not disloyalty to the Crown, but to the people.

Yet, if we are encouraged by the resurrection of truth, let us also be warned by what led to its burial. Remember that, as moral force works only by producing consentient action, you must needs establish some common ground between yourself and those whom you would affect. You will not win over the idle loungers over their beer and tobacco by calling them a dissolute rabble, or a swinish

multitude. You will not win Irish sympathy by emulating Irish eloquence in vigour of abuse. What you have to do first is to establish some common object wanted by both you and your opponents, or some common principle honoured by both, and then to show that their plan will endanger what they profess to desire, while yours will secure it. Or if you have to do with people so ignorant that a common ground seems impossible, then there is nothing for it but "educate, educate, educate" until they, or rather their children, are brought to a higher level. But if a Pagan Emperor could say, "There is nothing human that I count alien from myself," how much more should we—who, whether we own it or not, have learned from Christ the enthusiasm of humanity—how much more should we find some bond of brotherhood with all men, from the most bigoted Tory even to the most contemptible trifler! Let us get rid of arrogance, let us dismiss the notion of our infallibility, the fruitful source of scorn, of envy, hatred, malice, and there is no reason why we should not find some common ground with all. I never met a man who did not want the next generation to be better off than himself, and I always think such a desire is the germ of Liberalism. I never heard of a sane man incapable of distinguishing between justice and injustice. And that distinction is the beginning of politics.

Still, when you have established your common ground, beware of impatience. The Invisible Power, through whose inspiration humanity tends to fulfil the law of its being, is enthroned in eternity, and is unmoved by the fretfulness of self-will. Slowly through unreckoned myriads of ages, this creature, man, emerged from brute

unconsciousness. Even then, for thousands of years, his lower nature repressed the gleams of higher life that dawned mysteriously from within. It has required the toil and sacrifice of a hundred generations to establish the fact that there is such a thing as moral force at all. And do we now complain because right opinions do not triumph in a day? Unless you are content to labour and to wait, and to die at last content with the consciousness that you have done your part in an unfinished work, you have not the stuff in you of which the true reformer is made.

And yet it is to no dreary resignation, to no forlorn hope, that I invite you. If you grasp the heart of the questions of the day, and realise how even in their unfolding they affect the welfare of men, women, and children now in life, as well as the fate of the unborn, you will never lack interest in your work.

If you lay hold of such questions rather by the searching embrace of brotherly sympathy than by the superficial touch of the intellect, you will feel them pulsating with the expanding life of the race; and, though you will often have the disappointment of failure, you will never yield to despair. Because you will know that it is not a pedant's theory or a sentimental dream with which you have to do, but the irreversible destiny folded within the very germ of humanity, proclaimed by apostles and prophets of every creed, and slowly evolved by the honest work of every loyal-hearted man.

LECTURE IV.

THE LIMITS OF PHYSICAL FORCE.

SOME time ago, when the miseries of Ireland were bearing their inevitable fruits in disorders that shocked the world, Mr. Bright spoke with deep feeling and anxiety of the gravity of the problem. He did not disguise the difficulty he felt in suggesting any speedy cure, and he mentioned one vulgar notion of the issue only to discard it with mournful contempt. "Force is no remedy," he said. And thereupon all organs of the press, with a few honourable exceptions, broke into a chorus of amazed disapprobation. They treated this utterance of a venerable practical wisdom as the mere superfluity of arrogant paradox. "No remedy!" they shrieked. "If a burglar is taking away your plate, is it no remedy to knock him down? If a gang of assassins are about, is it no remedy to hang them? If secret conspirators are sapping the Throne and Constitution, is it no remedy to pounce upon them with a Lord-Lieutenant's warrant, and shut them up in Kilmainham?" And so through all the weary months that followed, of violent outbreak on the one hand, and violent repression on the other, the idea that "force is no remedy" was a perpetual refrain in the tirades of political satire; and the comparative quiescence secured in the course of the present year has been triumphantly traced to the Prevention of Crimes Act, while the working of the Land Act has been comparatively ignored.

Now, Mr. Bright never suggested that force was no remedy against particular deeds of violence. What he did say was that it was no cure for the chronic disorders of Ireland; and if he was wrong in this, then all lessons of historic experience are vain. Surely, if force were a remedy for disorder, Ireland ought to be the quietest country in the world. For, from the days of Henry II. until now, it has, in one point at least, borne a marked resemblance to the kingdom of Heaven, seeing that it has continually suffered violence, and the violent have taken it by force. But what Mr. Bright meant was that political and agrarian crime in Ireland has a deeper cause than the individual passions of disorderly people. Even in the latter case force would not be any sufficient remedy, as the persistency and extent of our own criminal population too clearly shows. But in Ireland the position is, and has been for hundreds of years, far other than that. Here we have a chaos maintained by the incongruity and incompatibility of different racial characteristics, hostile religions, conflicting traditions and land custom, all of which the central Government has insisted upon cramping into the uniform pattern of its own predilections and inherited policy. It is for this fermentation of irreconcileable customs and traditions that Mr. Bright declared force to be no remedy. Force can arrest the hand, but it cannot convert the heart. It can stop the mouth, but it cannot suppress the feeling. It can turn inward the violence of passion, but only at the expense of an inevitable explosion when the bitterness has been concentrated beyond endurance.

I have mentioned the case of Ireland because it is sure

to rise to the mind of every one, when the limits of physical force are mentioned. I may return to it again. But principles are better deduced from events in regard to which distance has mellowed party feeling; and for the subject immediately before us I know of no period more instructive than that of the wars, the triumph, and collapse of the British Commonwealth. We have seen how the grand impulse of Puritanic zeal degenerated into bigotry, was divided and weakened by faction, and lost itself amongst a stolid multitude. It is in such circumstances that the noblest reformers have been tempted to a momentary, and, as they hoped, exceptional resort to physical force. This was the case with Cromwell's Ironsides in their endeavour to force their noble policy on an unprepared nation. I, for one, do not at all doubt the sincerity of their declarations, made more than once, when the triumph of the "new model" was approaching its consummation, that they were the humble servants of the civil power, and would lay down their arms at a word. But there was always a tacit, almost unconscious reservation, that the objects for which they believed themselves commissioned from Heaven to fight should first be finally attained. And amongst the foremost of those objects was the establishment of a certain amount of religious freedom, unfettered either by priest or presbyter.

This new model army was surely one of the most efficient military instruments ever invented. Never numbering more than 22,000 men, its spirit, discipline, and arms were such that any detachment from it could always be relied upon to give a good account of double the number of foes. But in this respect it might be paralleled by any

other well disciplined force recruited from citizens with a stake in their country. A much more extraordinary feature of this army was the high tone of its moral inspiration. In this respect also, some close analogies might be found in the rise of the Dutch Republic, and in the best episodes of the French Revolution, and of the American Civil War. Yet even in such cases, the zeal of secular-minded patriots fell far short of the priestly fervour with which Cromwell's soldiers hewed their foes in pieces before the Lord as an acceptable sacrifice. Repulsive as the idea is now to us, the Puritan battle was a horrible form of choral worship ; and even in the prayer-meeting, Hugh Peters and his flock scarcely felt themselves so near to their God as they did in the headlong charge.

Do not think that I am in these words justifying the stigma of barbarous fanaticism which supercilious, bloodless, and soulless critics have sought to fix on those men. There is a great deal to be said for the view that the slaughter of men in battle must be either a religious sacrifice or a murder. In other words, the only justification for blasting men with gunpowder and mowing them down with sabres is, that their existence is by no possibility any longer congruous with the divine order meant by the kingdom of God ; that in fact, their continuance involves chaos or Hell. That this was true of the Royalist army of that day I have no manner of doubt. That it was true of the Confederate army in the American civil war is, I think, equally certain. It was so too with the Sepoy mutineer armies at Delhi and Lucknow. On the other hand, it certainly was not true of the Punjab troops who were blown from guns in batches of fifty at a time after they had laid down their

arms. And whether it could at any time be said of Arabi's soldiers in Egypt, I confess I have very serious doubts.

I have said elsewhere that the time is gone by when war could be carried on as an act of worship. Perhaps that is too sweeping an assertion. If such a thing can be conceived as a last effort of expiring despotism and priestcraft to arrest the progress of popular self-government and the destruction of privilege, or if any nation professing democracy were to be so intoxicated with vanity as to claim a sort of corporate imperialism over human affairs, a state of things might arise in which the avenues of the future would be blocked by physical force, and there might be no issue but through the battle-field. In such a case it is conceivable that war might be a sacred duty. But I have little patience with the levity which threatens the slaughter of 100,000 men as an alternative to the payment of an indemnity of a few hundred pounds, or which would suspend the fate of modern civilisation on the terms of a diplomatic apology. At any rate—to return to our more immediate subject—the efficiency of the new model army as an instrument of war was in great measure the result not of any disposition to shed blood with lightness of heart, but rather of a sacred despair, animated to arms only by the faith that man's extremity is God's opportunity.

Again, and lastly, so far as the characteristics of this army are concerned, it was distinguished as no other army recorded in history ever was, by an amazing combination of striking individuality in its elements, with an intense corporate unity in the aggregate. Certainly as regards its nucleus, the troops of the Eastern Counties Associa-

tion, every man therein was selected because he had a character of his own. It is a mistake to suppose that any Shibboleth was required. Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, and even more extreme sectaries, were alike enrolled, on the one condition that they had given proofs of godliness, or in other words, of moral earnestness inspired by religious faith. Of course, cant was possible ; you can never make it impossible, so long as words are available for concealing as well as for revealing thought. But at first there was not much of it. There was then nothing to be gained by it. The cause of the Parliament was apparently the failing cause, and cruel vengeance might surely be expected from the victor. A large number of the men were little freeholders, members of that yeomanry class, the loss of which has been one of the direst wounds ever inflicted on the progress of England. They were selected by committees who, under Cromwell's directions, chose only men with some repute for hearty devotion to the cause. In fact that was the essence of the plan laid by Cromwell before Hampden, probably at Edge Hill. (See preface, p. vii.), to set the solemn convictions of religion against the haughty spirit of "honour." Now, if such men had been formed by priests, they would have been all of one type. But it was not so. In their own circles they were rather leaders than followers. They read the Bible for themselves. They formed their own conclusions. Therefore there was a marked tendency to individuality of character among them. Large numbers of them followed the system of independency, according to which each separate congregation formed a little republic within itself.

But marked as was the individuality of these Cromwellian soldiers, the most wonderful feature of all was the perfection of the unity they exhibited in diversity. If they were scattered in half-a-dozen detachments under as many different leaders, whatever might be the varieties of doctrine preached, or the various fortunes of polemical arguments, it was certain that they would all be animated by the same spirit, that they would observe the same discipline, and practise the same tactics. We may add, that they would all be equally certain of victory. This unity was of course mainly due to the impress of the one master mind which had conceived the idea of such an army, and had wrought it out even to the smallest detail. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that this unity consisted merely in the common badge of subserviency to their strongest man. That they could cherish convictions opposed even to the mind of Oliver, is abundantly proved by the mutiny on Corkbush Field, by the free discussions of the army council, by the repeated remonstrances they addressed to their officers, by their final objection to Cromwell's schemes for Charles' restoration, and by the repugnance they showed to the proposal to crown the Protector. Their unity was something far profounder than can ever be effected by a mere personal mastery; it was a oneness of conviction as to national policy. And their motion of that policy was very much the Radical programme of the present day, with some inevitable differences owing to the condition of the times. Freedom of conscience, equality before the law, cheap justice, a common-sense code, frequent parliaments, proportionate representation—such were some of the principles advocated

by this armed political league. Such principles, heated into a sacred passion by religious zeal, were the true bond of that unparalleled army. Remembering all this, their individual characters, their perfect discipline, their liberal policy, and their patriotic aspirations, I think it must surely be conceded that the physical force of a nation was never embodied in a nobler form.

After the victory of Naseby the soldiers of this army became the arbiters of England's destiny. But the position was scarcely as yet acknowledged even by themselves. The Parliament was charged with the duty of completing the godly reformation demanded; yet there was always the tacit assumption that the reformation was to be precisely what this army had fought for. But in the wearisome and futile negotiations following the surrender of the King, an alarming friction was engendered between this Radical army and what—if a farther anachronism be allowed—we may term the Whig Parliament. The difficulty about pay, and the proposal to defer the solution of that until they were disbanded, began the quarrel; but it rapidly extended to more important matters. The men began to fear that the future constitution would be settled by King and Parliament on the Presbyterian model, and that this would exclude some of the dearest objects for which they had ventured life and fortune. Astute Cornet Joyce disposed of this scheme by taking possession of Majesty in the interests of the army. Let me here remind you that the first thing these men did when they got possession of their King, was to admit to him his Episcopal pastors, of whose ministrations the Presbyterian Parliament had deprived him. This, so far as it went, was a proof that in

putting freedom of conscience in the forefront of their policy, they meant it for others as well as for themselves.

If even now the Presbyterian leaders of the Commons could have brought themselves to face the situation, and to frankly admit the necessity for compromise, every manifesto issued by the army shows that the soldiers would not have been unreasonable. Unfortunately those leaders were possessed heart and soul by a theory—the theory of John Calvin—as to the divinely ordered constitution of Church and State. Now, when men have constructed on narrow and insufficient premises a life theory entirely complete and consistent within itself, they are often so charmed with its completeness and consistency, that they never think of re-examining the basis on which the theory rests. If politicians, they resent such a proposal as revolutionary. If theologians, they stigmatise it as infidelity. So blinded are they by devotion to their idol, that men of far inferior culture can often correct them, simply because wayfaring men, though fools, are often forced by circumstances into contact with facts entirely foreign to the study of the cloister or the cabinet. Hence arises that practical paradox, so often the theme of conservative satire and sneer, that the unlearned multitude have to force reforms in the teeth of the cultured minority.

Take, for instance, the question of property, around which a battle has raged so long in Ireland, a battle, destined, in spite of all precautions, and all depreciation, to spread to our own shores. On the insufficient basis of feudal tradition it used to be assumed that the tenure conceded to the landlord—the tenure, I say—for, mind you, even feudalism does not allow any absolute property in land to

anyone but the Sovereign—it was assumed that the tenure of land had a potent charm to convert into property, sacred to the landlord, the results of all labour permanently incorporated with it or affixed to it. Drains, fences, sheds, houses, once fixed in the ground, ceased to be the property of the man who produced them, and passed over to the landlord. Nay, in cases of rent, even the moveable property of a stranger, such as grazing flocks or agricultural machines, might be seized by the all-absorbing landlord. So firmly fixed in the theory of property was this feudal superstition, that any one who disputed its fairness was liable to the odious charge of invalidating any and every kind of ownership. Such confidence did its defenders show, that they boldly appealed to all workers and all dealers to stand by them. For, said they, if these revolutionists are allowed to steal away the landlord's undoubted rights, they will next enter your shops and distribute your goods amongst the mob. Nay, if the working man has two good coats instead of one, they will insist on handing over one of them to his drunken neighbour in ragged shirt-sleeves.

Now what is the power that has successfully assaulted this superstition in Ireland, and has begun to attack it in Scotland and England? Of course there have been moral philosophers, and thoughtful philanthropists, who have seen the truth and have proclaimed it. But as to overthrowing the abuse by their arguments, Mr. Gladstone might as well expect to fell an obstinate old oak with a speech. What has begun, and what will work out a beneficent revolution is the fact, proved by the hard experience of poor husbandmen and farmers, that the feudal tradition

offers an utterly insufficient basis for the practical organisation of labour in a crowded country. The Irish cottars were outside of the feudal tradition. They inherited a wholly different one, that of tribal community in land. And though their ancient system was, and is, incapable of revival, yet its memory sharpened their antagonism against laws which in their case made life intolerable. The absorption of all permanent results of their labour by landlord's claims, and the growth of the burden of rent in exact proportion to the tenant's investment of work and money, might be a logical outcome of the feudal tradition ; but this only proved that the basis of the system did not cover the necessities of modern life. The deeds of violence to which the sufferers resorted deserve a condemnation hardly less stern than the long oppression that provoked them. Of the wrong done to themselves, as well as to their opponents, by deeds of blood, we cannot speak too strongly. My conviction is that such crimes hampered, delayed and mutilated the reforms which an unembarrassed public opinion must otherwise have enforced. But they do not detract from my present contention, that the needs of life, as forced on the attention of the comparatively ignorant multitude of toilers, have often to correct the self-satisfaction of cultivated theorists. Unfortunately that multitude have frequently been tempted to think that their superiority in numbers suggested physical force as the shortest way to victory. And it is on this point of the availability of physical force as a short cut to reform, that the triumph and the failure of the Ironsides is full of instruction for all following times.

For the position, in the issue between the Parliament

and the army, was very much what I have just described. Whichever way judgment may incline when a few distinguished Independents of that day are compared with Presbyterian leaders, certainly the weight of what we call in these times respectability, and gentility, and culture, was on the side of the Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Of the army it might be said, as St. Paul said of the Primitive Church, that "not many wise, not many learned, not many mighty were called." Hugh Peters represented their divinity, General Harrison their enthusiasm; and Carlyle's "pudding-headed friend," John Hodgson, may be accepted as a fair specimen of their rank and file. As a rule, they had no means of knowledge, other than what was afforded by practical experience and common sense. But with sincerity of spirit, and devotion to some ends higher than personal interest, such means of knowledge are amply sufficient for the moral needs of life. And these men said to themselves, "We know we are right. God has made men of one blood, but He has not made them of one opinion. Experience shows us that we may be equally good Christians, though some of us are Independents, and some Anabaptists, and others Presbyterians. But those Presbyterian members are wasting their time in attempting to enforce an impossible uniformity, while the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth, are wholly neglected. We have arms in our hands, and we will stand it no longer." This was the sum and substance of their long manifestoes and petitions, done into modern English. It is true that the quarrel began with a question of arrears, and was aggravated by a vote of censure on the

troops passed in March 1647. But all the records of the time go to show that, before the controversy had proceeded far, such causes of discussion were wholly subordinated to the graver and larger issues I have mentioned. Never had unconstitutional violence a better excuse or a better prospect of success. Yet, though the army had its way, events speedily proved that it had totally failed of accomplishing its aim. How this was let us now see.

To do them justice, the soldiers were not first in offering violence to the Parliament. On July 26, 1647, the city mob broke into the house, and compelled the members to go through the farce of passing votes inviting the King's return. But the mob would not have attempted this, had not the Parliament been already humiliated and demoralised by the attitude of the army. Thus the very threat of physical violence deranges and confuses constitutional action. And if the House of Commons had become weak, effete, out of harmony with the best impulses of the time, this was part of the curse of civil war, which closes the ordinary currents of political movement, and sweeps all the representative men of the nation into the hostile armies. Within ten days after that disgraceful riot the army was in Westminster. The members who had fled to it for protection were restored, and the most obnoxious Presbyterian leaders had gone into exile.

What followed is a well-known story. The Parliament might propose, but the military council disposed. With characteristic English love for clothing the most revolutionary procedure with the respectability of old-

fashioned form, the army requested the Parliament to go on deliberating, but always with the tacit understanding that their conclusions should not neutralise the triumph of the soldiers. The treaty of Newport in September and November, 1648, threatened to have that effect. Charles appears to have given a hollow consent to it, precisely because it would revive the issues between the Presbyterians and Independents, while it would induce the Scots to intervene against the army. The wearied Parliament saw in this treaty a last chance of throwing off the military yoke. They therefore summoned up courage to reject the remonstrance of the army, and by a majority of 46 adopted the King's concessions as a basis of negotiation. It is not surprising that the army council intervened. If this thing had been allowed, all their previous action would have been in vain. But I do not care now to discuss, as I have done elsewhere, the justice of their proceeding. I can only say that if I had lived at that time I hope I should have cast in my lot with the army. Yet not the less do I see in the revolutionary violence of "Pride's Purge," a lesson on the tendency of unconstitutional physical force, even when directed by the best motives, to go on adding confusion to confusion.

From what I have said in the second lecture concerning the execution of Charles I., it will be remembered that I regard it as a warning, not against the violence of rebellion, but against the infatuation of irresponsible power; while at the same time its solemn and formal publicity was a rebuke to the cowardice of assassination. I now hasten on to the development of military rule under the name of a Commonwealth.

From the beginning of 1649 Cromwell rapidly attained undisputed supremacy. To an unreserved adoption of Independent principles he added an unequalled swiftness of decision, and vigour of action, such as made him obviously the man of the time. His mission was to embody in actual fact that ideal of a godly realm which he shared with his fellow-soldiers. There was really nothing very visionary or impracticable about it. What he wanted was purity of morals, freedom of thought and action within somewhat elastic bounds, cheap and vigorous law, security for person and property, extended education, active trade, efficient municipal government, and the supremacy of England as the head of a Protestant Alliance against Anti-christ.

Making allowance for the times, it was a very noble ideal. Even its last element, the moral and religious supremacy of England, was more generous than the sordid clamour about "British interests" in our own day. And noble as the ideal was, even his detractors in their incidental admissions show that he went very far towards realising it. At any rate, trade prospered, national finance flourished, the intellectual work of the universities was strenuous, the highways were safe, and foreign dungeons opened at the bidding of the Lord Protector, or at the roar of his cannon.

How, then, came it to pass that, in 1660, when the heir of the God-forsaken Stuarts came back, the whole nation broke into a drunken delirium of joy? There are to my mind few pictures in our history more sad and depressing than that of the Commonwealth troops drawn up, grim, silent, melancholy, and helpless, while all London rushed

with pathetic joy to meet the man who was to sell England to France, and to admit the victorious Dutch into the Medway, while he wasted the national substance on panders and harlots. Think of the man who, but two years before, had loomed so large upon the world, whose strong and righteous rule had made England the wonder of royal and imperial courts. Contrast him with this drunken, debauched adventurer, who, not satisfied with perjuring his own soul, had blackened the character of his own mother to gain Scotch support in his selfish schemes. Then ask how it was that Englishmen, our own progenitors, almost with one consent enshrined this wretched creature in a halo of affection and worship, while they dragged from the grave the bones of the greatest ruler they had ever known, and hung them on a gibbet. There is no use in stigmatising that generation, or supposing that they were sinners above their fathers or descendants. They were the same men who had lined the streets when Oliver returned in triumph from Worcester. They had illuminated their streets for him as for a king; they had given thanks to God for him as the Lord's chosen vessel; and now they welcome as the Lord's anointed the poorest moral cripple that ever disgraced a throne. What was the reason of it?

The reason of it was that the moral force requisite to achieve so vast a political revolution as that designed by Cromwell, did not and could not exist in any one generation of men. It requires innumerable sacrifices of martyrs, voices crying in the wilderness, unappreciated apostles and disregarded prophets, to bring about a change like that. The population of England had not, in Cromwell's

day, reached a condition in which any moral force whatever, even though operating through the longest lifetime, could accomplish so stupendous a work. Physical force had been needed to supplement moral influence, and when that force was removed, it was as when twisted strands of cord revolve giddily back to their natural position, and even twist themselves in a reverse direction.

I must not be misunderstood. I do not think that much actual violence was done to public opinion under Oliver's rule. In his expulsion of the Parliament all evidence goes to show that the feeling of the nation was with him. The conspirators and assassins, encouraged by the proclamation of a "Christian King," found little encouragement in the country when they landed, and found an insuperable difficulty in hiding themselves. Tired of revolution, sure of order and justice, the general public were willing enough that Oliver should rule, if only he would not trouble them to help him. But that was just what he did not wish. He desired the nation to rule itself; but what he meant by ruling itself was the establishment by mutual consent of practical reforms and practical regulations, such as would make life easier and safer to the many. "Relieve the oppressed," he had said; "hear the groans of poor prisoners in England; be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth." But when he found that the notion of self-government generally prevalent was a discussion of abstract principles involving a disturbance of the basis on which present security rested, he had no patience with it, and dissolved Parliament after Parliament

in the vain hope of securing more practical men. Except amongst a few royalists on the one hand and fanatics on the other, I do not think there was, during his lifetime, any great desire to rise against him. His swift career of victory in the second civil war, in Ireland, and in the Scotch campaign,—especially, perhaps, his miraculous resurrection at Dunbar and his daring strategy in driving Prince Charles into England—had, as it were, dazed the minds of men, and they accepted him as inevitable. So secure, indeed, was his rule, that for nearly two years after his death it survived even in the hands of incompetence and faction. Then came the chance of reversion to more familiar ways. The whole nation awoke to a sense of the strain that had been put upon it; and, forgetful of the causes that had required it, rushed back into self-indulgent corruption. Thus military force in a master hand, animated by the noblest motives and directed to statesman-like aims, utterly failed to supplement the moral deficiencies of an unripe age.

Not only so, but the result of the failure was a disastrous reaction. When we consider the abject degradation of the following age, the cruel persecutions, the shameless vice, the national humiliation of the second Charles's reign, we are reminded of a Gospel parable which, in reference to our natural craving after instantaneous cures for every ill, is very suggestive: “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man”—gone, be it observed, not by any slow process of natural healing, but by sudden miracle—“he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.” “Yes, “swept and gar-

nished," but "empty." There are no good spirits there, stronger than he, to keep him out. The cure at best is only negative. The void, the stillness, the constrained order make more scope for evil passion, and invite it. "Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." It is not enough to drive out the evil: sudden force can often do that; but unless the good spirit can be brought in and domiciled so as to feel at home, the evil is certain to come back again with sevenfold vigour. To do the Puritans justice, they did their best to supply the good spirit; but what they offered had too much sectarianism and too little of broad humanity in it to be natural. It was the ecstasy of St. Paul in the seventh heaven, rather than the sweet sunshine of Galilee. It could never be domiciled in England so as to feel at home, and, therefore, the house was practically empty for the devils that Charles II. brought back with him.

Consider now how the same truth is taught by other historical crises. Take, for instance, the great French Revolution. The intolerable condition of the poor, the desperate state of the national finances, and the infatuated obstinacy of the old nobility precipitated an appeal to physical force. With wild joy the mob found themselves masters of the situation, and the era of liberty, equality and fraternity was proclaimed. But the moral conditions of such an era had not been established. For liberty requires mutual concession, nay, mutual subordination. And equality implies something more than the sentiment of citizenship; it implies reverence for humanity in every

form, when disguised by conventional rank, as well as when marred and begrimed by toil. And fraternity involves a recognition of an organised common interest, which always suffers through the self-assertion of parties or factions, and cannot be served by internal tumult. These moral conditions did not exist in France at that time. And, therefore, when once the appeal had been made to physical force, the State was hurled from one spasm of violent convulsion to another, like the unfortunate swimmer who the other day dared the fury of Niagara, now whirled in a passionate eddy, now flung from side to side of stormy faction, until the might of an imperial genius seized upon it, and swept it paralysed and dazed into the broad current of his ambition.

Here, again, as in the crisis of the English Commonwealth, we do not necessarily blame mortal actors for their ignorance of eternal law. But we may come to blame ourselves if by their mistakes we do not learn better. Mob violence in Paris terrified the Courts of Europe, and invited war. Resistance to invasion begot the strange idea of enforcing liberty, equality, and fraternity by fire and sword throughout the world. Such a delusion made the people an easy prey to a successful general, and thus it came to pass that a military despotism was established on the embers of the revolution. Of course that great movement has secured enormous benefits to the French peasantry, who were thereby planted on the soil. Whether it equally benefited the poor of the towns I am not so sure. But when we call to mind that bathos of ignoble villainy, the Second Empire, when we think of the successful treason of that December day, the cruel bloodshed, the wholesale

deportations, the abject submission of Paris, the masquerade of imperialism ending in the mutilation of France and the tragedy of the Commune, I think we may at least wish that moral force had played a larger part in the French Revolution. Is the curse exhausted yet? Who knows? We, with Cyprus as a "place of arms," with Egypt on our hands, and Afghanistan in memory, and Zululand reduced to chaos, have little right to criticise the "glory and gunpowder business," as carried on by others. Yet we may be permitted to regret that since the Germans exorcised imperialism, the house seems to have been swept and garnished only for spirits of the same kind.

Let us look at home. How long have we been in learning that an Ireland held by physical force alone is at once a source of weakness, and a disgrace to our national fame? Catholic emancipation seemed to announce to the world that we had learned the lesson fifty years ago. But that feudal superstition of which we have spoken, the superstition that stealing by the landlord is one of the rights of property, clings more closely than even religious bigotry. The stinted concessions made to religious equality were held to justify an uncompromising rigour of repression in other directions. The necessity for complying with a claim once scouted as unreasonable, might surely have suggested a suspicion that other demands, hitherto condemned, could perhaps make a show of justice. But instead of that, the continuance of Irish discontent was held to be proof positive of the impossibility of satisfying Ireland by justice, and an overwhelming argument for reiterated coercion. Yet coercion never succeeded. If you wish to make an opponent your friend, you do not

call it success to knock him down, and bind him, and gag him. But that is all coercion has ever done for Ireland. Physical force does not awaken moral sympathies ; and these are essential to national union. Some two years ago the world was shocked by the Phœnix Park murders. Both the victims awakened universal sympathy. But there were circumstances of peculiar pathos in the violent death of a young man who had only that day entered on his official duties, and even in the eyes of his murderers was wholly guiltless of any obnoxious act. The horror excited brought about a reaction in favour of law, which for the moment paralysed even secret conspiracy. The House of Commons is rarely in a melting mood. But in the shadow of that crime even the bitterest opponents were softened by a common sorrow. The widowed wife wrote a letter inspired by the central doctrine of Christianity, that the sacrifice of the innocent may be the conversion of the guilty. It did seem to me—and I expressed the feeling publicly then—that high policy should have seized that moment of universal emotion to abandon a system so fruitful in demoniac passion, to set free all methods of constitutional agitation, and equalise Irish with English law.

Such a course might have been more costly : because it is not any leniency towards crime that I am suggesting, but its repression by extra vigilance and more efficient patrols after the ordinary methods. Certainly murder must be stopped ; and so must burglary. But if robbery is unusually rife in a neighbourhood, we do not usually change the law. We only enforce it more vigorously. We double or treble the police patrols, and urge them to more

vigilance. Or if the exceptional occurrences should prove the law to be defective, we change and improve it, not for the affected neighbourhood only, but for the whole country. Now, I cannot help thinking that if this policy had been acted on in Ireland, in conjunction with the passage of a land reform adapted, not to the prejudices of English peers, but to Irish opinion; and if, at the same time, a prospect had been clearly held out of a local government scheme throwing the responsibility for order upon elected Irish representatives, much more would have been accomplished for the cause of order than has been attained at present. The statesmanship which passed the Land Act is indeed worthy of all loyalty. We may look to it with the certain confidence that its further proposals for dealing with the Irish problem will go deeper still into the heart of the difficulty. But though Mr. Bright himself, with profound regret, supported exceptional restrictions on personal liberty in Ireland, I still venture to think that the state of feeling manifested at recent Irish elections is a fresh illustration of the truth of his own words that "force is no remedy."

Two of the most ancient Christian writings, in speaking of divine grace, repeat the singular phrase that "violence does not belong to God." The writers apparently thought of the Eternal as an all-permeating life, which operates from within through the heart, not from without in lightning and thunder. And if the progress of civilization be towards the realisation of a divine ideal, I think we must look much more to the operation of this secret and silent growth than to outward pressure. In other words, we must look rather to evolution than to revolution. Now, evolution is

a vital process ; and any force, which weakens or disturbs the life, arrests or distorts the progress of evolution. That physical force has a province, no one of course can deny. It can sweep physical obstacles out of the way. It can repress destructive physical energies. But it cannot change discontent to loyalty. It cannot unite a divided people. The issue of the civil war in America may seem a proof to the contrary. But it is really not so. There are innumerable inducements to union between the States of America. The one reason for disunion was slavery ; and when that was violently removed, the uniting forces began to act again.

As with a nation, so with its individual elements. Physical force can hang the murderer, and shut up the burglar ; but it cannot convert the thief into an honest man. And it cannot dry up the foul sources from which crime is generated. Here again there are apparent exceptions. A great deal of crime is owing to the vile and dirty dens which pass for human habitations. Lay hold of the guilty usurers who make twenty or thirty per cent. from such property ; force them to disgorge in heavy fines their wicked gains, and you may perhaps effect something. But alas, how little ! So long as any of our countrymen live at so low a level that drink and lounging are their only pleasures, the demand for these dens will continue ; and were they accommodated with a palace, they would reduce it to their requirements and tastes. For the requisite reform of our monstrous land laws the needful moral impulse does not seem at present to exist. There is nothing for it, but the slow laborious process of permeation by a higher life. Every new school erected is a foun-

tain of invigoration. Every respectable club established is a centre of healthy organisation. Every free library opened is like a burst of sunlight on a dark place. Every political society, whether Liberal or Tory, helps to brace the looseness and limpness of opinion. Every extension of the franchise sets free some manly energies hitherto unused. And what if we see not the end? Other men laboured; we have entered into the fruit of their labours. Let us labour now, that others may reap after us.

LECTURE V.

THE SOURCES OF POPULAR ENTHUSIASM.

AMONGST the most progressive branches of science is that of philology, or the study of words; and Archbishop Trench, in his delightful illustrations of the subject, has shown that, within certain limits, it is well adapted to excite popular interest. There is, for average intelligence, a pleasing surprise in the discovery that words of every-day speech have had an eventful biography measured by thousands of years, and, in some cases, are more venerable than the pillars of Stonehenge. It excites delighted wonder to observe how a brief sound of one or two syllables, in the course of peregrinations round the world, has managed to pack within itself the concentrated experience both of dead and living races, both of vanished and of dawning civilizations.

Observe, for instance, this word *enthusiasm*. It expressed originally the sort of madness that seized a Greek prophetess intoxicated by the fumes issuing forth from some volcanic cave, supposed to be the shrine of a heavenly oracle. It was naturally extended to express the wild excitement of the votaries of Bacchus, whose idolatrous practices unfortunately survive even to the present day. The word was also applied to the fanatic fury characteristic of Eastern populations at some of their sacred festivals, when they anticipated the shouting and

bodily convulsions, and even the drums, and cymbals, and dancing now supposed to be necessary to energetic Christianity. With such antecedents, “*enthusiasm*” was adopted in more modern literature to express the subordination of reason to sentimental passion, either in an individual or a multitude. Thus the word has generally been used with a bad, or at any rate, with a depreciatory meaning. This was especially the case in the last century, when a sort of cynical common-sense treated as idle extravagance every kind of earnestness, whether religious or political. And the evil reputation of the word attended it so far that the late Isaac Taylor, in his “*Natural History of Enthusiasm*,” written some fifty years ago, treated the affection as at least morbid, though perhaps pardonable.

But words have their vicissitudes of fortune as well as men and nations; and it is surely suggestive of some marked difference between the present century and the last, that within our own lifetime there has been a growing tendency to use the word *enthusiasm* in a good sense rather than a bad. Certainly, in the year 1783, to say of a man that he was an enthusiast, would have been very nearly a polite way of calling him a fool. In the earlier part of this century, it might have commended him to sympathy on account of an amiable weakness. But at the present day I think the experience of my hearers will bear me out that the word is almost always commendatory. To say of a doctor or a schoolmaster that he is an enthusiast in his profession, goes a long way to secure him confidence. And if you call to mind the sighs and lamentations of local political leaders over the lack of enthusiasm, you will feel that they at least consider it an unmixed good. I cannot

help thinking that the change in the connotation of this word is suggestive of a certain increase of sincerity, seriousness, and heartiness in general feeling.

Another remark occurs to us when we remember the derivation of the term. For enthusiasm means simply "God in us," or, "possession by a God, or *dæmon*." The Greek prophetess, when intoxicated by the mephitic gases of the oracle cave, was supposed to be full of the oracle god. The servants of Bacchus again, after they had partaken too freely of the wine sacred to him, were politely supposed to be under a divine influence. Now the origin of a word may affect its meaning even when the derivation is utterly forgotten. At any rate it does so when that origin itself manifests any deep and abiding fact of human nature. For instance, the word *husband* is derived from two old English words signifying *house* and *bond*, or *bound*. Thus it meant either the bond of the house, or the man bound to the house. Young married men, who have outlived the enthusiasm or sacred intoxication of the honeymoon, and who feel occasionally the difference in freedom between the married and unmarried state, will be inclined to favour the latter derivation, "the man bound to the house." But in either case the association of the man and the house is so generally characteristic of human nature, that it has affected the meaning of the word, even when the derivation has been entirely ignored. There is some reason to think that the same thing is true of enthusiasm. Meaning originally possession by the divinity of some local shrine, it was preferentially applied, even when its derivation was never thought of, to individual or popular excitement caused by the alleged inter-

vention of supernatural powers. Thus the stigma of enthusiasm was, in the last century, attached much more frequently to religious movements than to any other kind of excitement. Considering that our own age is supposed to favour the impossible enterprise of excluding religion from civilisation, it is a little remarkable that a word with such unmistakable associations should latterly have grown so much in favour.

Let not any one speak with hasty contempt of the lowly origin of this word, as though that origin necessarily deprived its meaning of any possible sacredness. Such a mistake is akin to the error of despising all religious emotion because the earliest, or, at any rate, one of the earliest stages of religion was probably fetishism. You might as well despise Plato and Shakespere because the earliest form of humanity was probably a specialised ape. You might as well condemn astronomy because it sprang from a superstitious astrology; or chemistry, because begotten of a fatuous alchemy. Nay, the most devout man will feel no shame whatever in the spiritual brotherhood of the primeval savage, thrilled to the bone with wonder at the strange sights nature offered to awakening reason. Think of him separated from his tribe in a long expedition, and absolutely alone during a day's journey over some vast unfriendly, foodless, waterless plain. At night, wearied and hungry, he reaches the border of a mountain forest, and crouches under the brushwood near the foot of a towering solitary tree. Consciousness in him has just developed so far as to contrast self with the world, and to make possible the emotions of wonder and fear at the many moving and acting powers that are not himself. The

sense of loneliness now brings with it not merely a fear of fleshly foes, but a vague apprehension engendered by the restlessness of this newly awakened faculty of wonder in any unaccustomed scenes. Here, as the darkness deepens, the whispering of the leaves, and the swaying of the branches, and the cries of the unfamiliar creatures give him strange forebodings. In his troubled sleep he is visited by the image of a warrior of his tribe killed in some former expedition toward this distant land, when the wanderer himself was only a child. Starting from sleep, he sees two eyes glimmering in the dusk, and a serpent-form wavering and swaying above his head. And then, as he rises erect, the form with swift, gliding, sinuous motion, ascends the trunk of the giant tree, without foot, or hand, or wing, and disappears amongst the thick foliage above. Assuming the sort of dawning intellect and emotion supposed, we may be sure that the poor savage would be ready to regard this spot as the haunt of mysterious powers. Feeble as is that glimmer of a world beyond sense, still it is the dawn of that higher life in which humanity wrestles with the mystery of nature, till wonder is lost in loyalty to eternal law, and self is sacrificed to the Infinite. It would be natural for him to hang offerings upon that tree. His experience would bring others to the place. Tradition would hallow it. In after-ages of higher development it would become the fitting site of a Temple, though all memory of the reason for its sacredness would be lost or disguised in myth. And when Christianity conquered Paganism, the Temple would be succeeded by a Cathedral Church. But through all changes of form, the abiding sentiment of the place would be a feeling of awe

for the measureless power manifested in the exhaustless life, the endless variety, of nature, and in the unfolding destiny of man.

I repeat that the primeval experience to which such religious sentiment may perhaps be traced, instead of being base and contemptible, has in it—to quote a celebrated phrase—the “promise and potency” of the contemplative emotions inspiring the very noblest men, such as Plato, St. Paul, and the creator of Hamlet. But my business is not now with “the bright particular stars” of the historic firmament. It is rather with the faint, diffused lustre of the general human life, in which millions of individual experiences are merged, and in which we realize the vitality of uncounted ages past, as the Milky Way reveals the depth of illuminated space. I believe the paroxysms of popular emotion, that have done most to accelerate progress, have very frequently indeed justified the name of enthusiasm in its original sense, because they have been due to religious sentiment, and to consciousness of a Divine impulse. Nay, I will go farther. I shall maintain that all popular devotion to other than selfish ends is religious in its essence, and on that account is rightly termed enthusiasm.

In the case of crowds as well as individual men, there is a great difference between the agonizing passion of self-preservation, and forgetfulness of self in some higher end. The former has no right whatever to the name of enthusiasm. It was not enthusiasm which animated the starving Parisian crowds of the last century with a common impulse to attack the bakers’ shops. It was the ravening passion of a hungry lion. But the ecstasy of devotion which drew them after Dumouriez, and hurled

them with undisciplined valour against the invading allies, was undoubtedly enthusiasm, and in the sacrifice of the citizen to his country, of the part to the whole, it had in it the essence of religion.

None will dispute that this was true of the sacred phrenzy that seized on all western Europe in the eleventh century, when Peter the Hermit preached the first crusade against the Saracens. It is customary, indeed, to smile at the blind passion of that time. But no such deep convulsion of the masses of mankind can ever be the proper subject for a smile. From the broad plains of France, from the valleys of the Rhine and the Moselle, knights and friars, farmers and peasants, nay, women and children as well, issued forth in wild, undisciplined troops, until at least three hundred thousand were struggling along the banks of the Danube towards the East. Villages and hamlets were left empty, even thriving towns were half depopulated. With amazing improvidence these hordes set out without either organisation or leaders. For food they depended at first on charity, and then, by necessity, on plunder. Among the savage tribes of Hungary and Bulgaria they were slain in thousands; but still the remnant struggled on, driven by intolerable anguish at the thought that the tomb of their Saviour should be held by Mohammedan miscreants. The Eastern emperor, distracted by the clamour and disorder they brought around his walls, ferried them over into Asia, and there at length their miserable pilgrimage ended in a pyramid of bones built by Soliman out of their mutilated remains.

It is easy to moralise on the blindness of popular impulse. It is natural to pity the infatuation that culminated

in such a fate. It is only just to condemn the slaughter of Jews and heretics, by which the line of march was marked. But after all has been said, the passion that in this case rent the ties of home and custom was no self-seeking greed. In their horror of Saracenic conquest that mob of martyrs were right. The suppression of Christian civilisation by the triumphant crescent would ultimately have made all Europe an Ottoman dominion, the prey of the "unspeakable Turk." And though this was a fate those victims could not foresee, yet in the protest of their tragic death we may recognise the prophetic impulse that sometimes animates profound popular feeling. At any rate, that strange event, dark though it is with fanaticism, ignorance, and superstition, is still pregnant with the lesson that religious emotion is one of the mightiest sources of popular enthusiasm.

Here, again, we must guard ourselves against the narrow prejudice which judges the past wholly by the present, and expects in the bud what should only be looked for in the ripened fruit. Doubtless there is more of warning than of example in the first crusade, a warning much needed in times when men seek to rouse popular passion apart from the guiding and restraining influence of popular knowledge. The proper rule is, first explain facts and principles in the daylight of history and science; and then appeal to feeling as much as you can. It is much easier work to appeal directly to the passion always latent in fanciful ignorance. By so doing an adventurer may play his own game well; but he does it by making fools of the people. At the time of the reform of the calendar, when it was enacted that eleven days should be dropped out of

the almanac, it was easy enough to influence the mob with the notion that they had been robbed of eleven days of life. "Give us our eleven days," they shouted in riotous assemblage, threatening to march in their thousands and overpower a base oligarchy which had thus robbed the poor. But though there was plenty of sound and fury in this case, there was no enthusiasm; for the element of self forgetful devotion was wanting. And precisely because it was present in the first crusade, I regard that as a genuine case of popular enthusiasm. But the miseries then caused by a blind leading of the blind are a warning to all time.

An analogous case of misguided religious enthusiasm may be found in the peasants' war of the sixteenth century. This sprang from the ecclesiastical reformation in Germany, but was a result entirely unforeseen and bitterly deplored by Luther. It was wholly opposed to his teaching. Nevertheless its promoters justified themselves by his insistence on the supreme authority of the Bible. They held with truth that the grinding burdens imposed on the poor by the petty governments then composing the empire were wholly opposed to the teaching of prophets and apostles. With a lack of historical perspective natural to ignorant people suddenly introduced to the Old Testament, they conceived themselves to have as much right to wield the sword of the Lord as Gideon or Joshua. Their sanguinary overthrow was a terrible lesson on the folly of trying to supplement, by revolutionary violence, the lack of moral reforming energy in an imperfectly developed society. But not the less their faith in the ideal of social justice, pictured by Hebrew prophets, may well command

sympathy for their enthusiasm. The discipline and organized unity lacked by them were conspicuous in the nobler war waged by the Netherlanders against the tyranny of Spain. Here, patriotism was allied with religion. Loyalty to civic order facilitated discipline, and prevented the waste of force always observable in the distracted violence of mobs. But the infrangible resolution that preferred the deluge of the North Sea, rather than the shadow of the Inquisition, was certainly due to the inspiration derived from new views of religion.

I have not hitherto mentioned the rise of the English Commonwealth, which nevertheless I have had all along in view. It will be obvious to you how this illustrates the origin of great popular enthusiasms in religious inspirations. The impression made by the character, and devotion, and moral earnestness of John Wyclif had never died out of English life, notwithstanding the apparent triumph of Plantagenet persecutions and Tudor worldliness. The popular joy in that brief glimpse of a purer faith left embers of reforming zeal which wandering winds from the Continental storm fanned into a flame. Queen Mary applied just sufficient repression to kindle it to glowing zeal; and neither Elizabeth nor James could henceforward damp down the fire. I should care nothing for Puritanism if it had been merely a protest against Lord Bishops and vestments. But all such external characteristics were accidental features imposed on its vital substance by conditions of the time. In its essence it was a desire for that divine order or kingdom identified by an apostle with righteousness, peace, and joy; and this divine order it hoped to secure by a simpler religion than

that of prelates. The multitudinous pamphlets of the time afford us, as it were, a photographic spectrum of the national feeling in the days of Charles. And as astronomers can tell us, by the collocation of lines in stellar spectra, what are the predominant constituent substances in distant stars, so we can judge by the comparative frequency of lines of thought and feeling in these pamphlets what were the chief elements in the national consciousness then. The result can leave no possible doubt upon our minds. Vast as were the political interests involved, the minds and hearts of the multitude were almost entirely occupied with the religious issues. Take, for instance, John Viccars, who tells the story of the conflict in its earlier stage, who was much read at the time, and is certainly a representative man. His ecstasy as he notes each step of religious reformation, his delight in the endless sermons substituted for musical services, and his wild outburst of rugged, discordant eloquence over the destruction of Cheapside Cross, are an evident reflex of the feeling of his day.

But that I am right in attributing a deeper meaning than mere sectarian virulence to the enthusiasm of the time, is fairly proved by the more serious manifesto of the army. For these documents, while always pleading for a reasonable liberty of opinion, are imperative in their demands for a purer morality. That their framers were egregiously mistaken as to the power of the law to secure this has already, in a previous lecture, been fully acknowledged. But that does not invalidate the earnestness of their purpose, or the loftiness of their aims. Certain questions proposed for consideration in an invitation to

general prayer, issued by the Protector on March 20th, 1654, seem to me to spring from the deepest heart of the religion of the time. "Do we owe one another more for the grace of God," it is asked, "and for the spiritual regeneration, and for the image of Christ in each other, or for our agreement with each other in this or that form of opinion?" "Do we first search for the kingdom of Christ within us, before we seek one without us? Or do we listen to them that say concerning the coming of Christ, 'lo here, and lo there,'"—that is, in this or that form of worship or church government? "Do we not more contend for saints having the rule in the world, than over their own hearts?"

I want my friends and hearers to estimate at its true value the spirit of these words. I do not care what your sect may be, or what your theological or anti-theological bias. Be you Catholic or Protestant, or nothingarian, Salvation-army man, or so-called Atheist—our common humanity is stirred by such an appeal. Be your moral ideal of life what it may, and whether you express it by this pregnant phrase, "the kingdom of Christ," or not, I say it concerns you much to observe whether you strive to realise that ideal in yourself before you force it on others. Drop the suspicious word "saints," say Positivists, or Secularists, if you like. And still it will avail you much to ask, "Do we not more contend for our sect or school having the rule in the world than over their own hearts?" Do we not more contend that Radicals should carry elections, than that they should show a Radical sense of the rights of the poor, when it is to their own disadvantage? Do we not more contend that liberty, equality,

and fraternity should float us to the top of the poll, than that they should make us tolerant of opposition, considerate toward rivals, brotherly toward all men? Nay, do we not more contend that our party should attain to office than that it should practise its principles when it gets there?

Those heart-searching questions of "the great Independent" go far to reveal the source and the power of the enthusiasm that made possible the discipline, the valour and the victory of his soldiers. The very suggestion of the faults condemned shows how watchful was their spirit. They had an ideal of life. They believed in a divine order expressed by righteousness, peace, and joy. They believed in a divine energy of progress expressed by "the Holy Spirit." They strove first to realize in themselves that divine order. Very few amongst them could hope to get much worldly compensation for their losses and sufferings. Putting on one side, then, the leaders, whose purity of motive may be disputed, the rank and file were mostly pure enthusiasts; and they conquered because every possible personal end was merged in the one sole issue of victory for the cause. This is religion as a source of popular enthusiasm.

So far as we have gone, we have found the main source of popular enthusiasm to be the feeling, maintained here to be essentially religious, of joyful devotion to a common end, realized as greater than any individual interests, and recognized as the revelation of a sacred destiny. It is the sense of a common end that distinguishes the popular from the individual emotion. Art, or science, or philosophy may inspire individual enthusiasm, and a man may live in

entire solitude the life of a devotee. But to create popular enthusiasm there must be the realization of public aims, impossible without union, and grand enough to subordinate all self-will to their achievement. It need scarcely be said that such aims are always concerned with human destiny. The union of order and freedom, the increase of knowledge, the prevalence of "sweeter manners, purer laws," in one word, the evolution of the human race to the utmost range of its capacity—such are the most general common aims that in various more particular forms excite popular enthusiasm. But the secularity of such aims does not reduce them below the level of religion, nor does their bearing upon ourselves and our own race either convict them of selfishness, or allow them to appeal to it. These are the points that I want to make good now in application to our modern life.

Creeds, and modes of thought, and phraseology have greatly changed since Cromwell's days, but human nature remains pretty much the same; and now, as then, a vast consensus of popular feeling is necessary to any great and fruitful enthusiasm. It would be idle to ignore the fact that the watchwords of popular faith and devotion, then, are not, in the same sense, watchwords of popular faith and devotion at the present day. Take this one fact in evidence. It is certain that in Commonwealth days an overwhelming majority of the population, all in fact who were not kept at home by sickness or other absolute necessity, would be found in places of worship every Sunday. In this age, he must be a very sanguine Christian who would assert that more than one-twentieth are to be found there on any one day. It would be a misrepresentation to say

that all the absentees have consciously, much less professedly abandoned the main outlines of the creed formerly accepted. But at any rate it sits more lightly upon them than on Cromwell's Ironsides. At the same time, it is equally patent to common-sense that a large number, and those not the least valuable for public service, have consciously surrendered at least the supernatural setting of the Puritanic religion. This also must be acknowledged, that even those who regret such a course feel an increasing charity towards unbelievers. "Let every man," they say, "be fully persuaded in his own mind." In other words, if a man follows the best judgment he can find in his own reason and conscience, he ought not to be condemned on earth; and if there is justice in heaven he will not be condemned there. The result of this acknowledged and growing dissidence is, that in general gatherings the savage custom of "taboo" is applied to religious feeling, and the noblest emotions that have ever stirred the heart of man are excluded from our political energies. Of course sectarianism is active in sectarian coteries, and it is always present to embitter political strife. But the large-hearted loyalty of a truly catholic religion is incapable of sectarianism. It drowns and effaces it in a universal love, as the ocean swallows up the bitter waters of little polluted rivers and shows no sign. I have laboured in vain if I have not shown that the tone of Oliver's army had a good deal of this largeness of soul in it, and therefore it united men of very different opinions in a common enthusiasm.

But we are, theologically, far less agreed than even Oliver's Independent army. Therefore we strive to set up

an arbitrary distinction between things sacred and things secular, a distinction that answers to no real fact of history or human nature, and is a fruitful cause of hollow hypocrisy. Among the worst effects of it is its impoverishment of the sources of popular enthusiasm ; and against this I must raise an earnest protest. Picture to yourselves a group of Oliver's soldiers round their camp-fire, before Naseby fight, discoursing of their faith and hope for "these poor nations," as they were in the habit of calling them. These men have irreconcible opinions about many things ; but they are all agreed that a kingdom of God is possible on earth, that it will be a society in which law and justice are identical, while healthy and equal conditions will open to every man an honourable and a happy career. Further, they are agreed that divine Providence has put arms into their hands that they may prepare the way for this kingdom. They are chosen instruments for the purpose ; and they are so filled with it, that for its attainment either a life of labour or a death in battle is to them a happy sacrifice. Here are three ideas,—a political ideal, a divine destiny, and a joyful subordination of self to both. The issue is a triumphant enthusiasm.

Now change the scene and the time. The sons of these men, their grandsons, their great-grandsons, have passed away, and their remoter descendants are assembled in a London hall to consider the destinies of their country in the nineteenth century. These men have gone wider apart theologically than their ancestors. One is a Methodist, another an Irvingite, a third a Swedenborgian. Here is a Unitarian, there a Theist, and another thinks himself an Atheist. Obviously there must be no religion

here, no kingdom of God, no divine Providence, no sacred call to a life of sacrifice. No ; they must confine themselves to questions of the Income Tax ; the incidence of rates ; the difference between the policy of Tweedledum and Tweedledee in Turkey, in Egypt, in Zululand ; the manipulation of the suffrage, and Parliamentary procedure. These may be important details of public business ; but as to looking for popular enthusiasm about them, you might as well fill a horse with sawdust, and expect from it the effect of corn.

Now why must these descendants of an inspired race be so much poorer than their fathers ? If they have diverged in petty matters of opinion, they are still men, creatures of infinite hopes and fears, with the wealth of history behind them, with an enormous stage of action around them, with the wonder of the future before them. If they would think of it, there are, in their relations to the laws of the universe and to the destinies of their kind, reasons for awe and devotion which no theological differences should prevent their sharing. They are alike susceptible to the glory of a political ideal, identical in all but name with the Puritan “kingdom of God.” And in every tie that binds them to their kind, in every slowly working cause of the immeasurable past issuing in what they now are, they might recognise a call to loyalty toward that sacred whole of which they are parts ; nay, they might hear a summons to a life as purely devotional as that of an apostle.

Here you have precisely the same ideas you found among the Independent soldiers—a political ideal, a divine destiny, or, if you prefer it, an eternal law, and a call to subordination of self. Let that ideal be unfolded,

let that destiny be recognised, let that call be obeyed, and there is no reason why all these men—so-called Atheists, included—should not dwell in a halo of religious emotion as much as their forerunners. Differences of theological opinion have far less to do with the matter than is commonly supposed. Be the differences what they may, they fall within the range of the universe; they cannot annul its laws; they may disguise, but they cannot obliterate feelings essential to humanity. They leave untouched the obvious facts of human evolution, of the inter-relations between man and the universe, of the insignificance of the individual, of the majesty of the race, of mutual responsibility, and the glory of devotion. Here are all the elements of enthusiasm. And wide as thought may range, there must be possible a catholicity wider still, to which nothing healthily human is foreign. In that catholicity a holy communion is conceivable which may yet restore the sacred fire of religion to politics.

Political idealism, then, is a source of popular enthusiasm essentially religious in its nature, and independent of sectarianism. Surely there is something pathetic in the reflection how, through age after age, weary toilers and noble martyrs have been sustained by the prophetic hope of the good time coming. And do not say that they were deceived. They none of them expected to see it in their day. To watch it drawing nearer was their joy. To work for it and to suffer for it gave a sense of nobility to life. And so it should be with our suffering, toiling brethren of this day. No charity, no legislation, no revolution, though it should turn the world upside down, would bring in their time the equal distribution of physical good

that they desire. But their protests and appeals and agitation bring reforms visibly nearer, and in the sense that they have not lived in vain even the poorest may find some heroic consolation for endurance. Political enthusiasm is sometimes, nay often, its own reward, and casts a gleam of something more than pleasure, a touch of the martyr's blessedness on the dreariest worldly lot.

Another source of popular enthusiasm, and one which by its very name suggests religious emotion of a sort, is that of hero worship. But as we formerly distinguished between merely selfish excitement and enthusiasm, so here we must take care not to confound with hero worship the mere idolatry of a popular puppet. Lord George Gordon, by appealing to the vilest susceptibilities of vulgar bigotry, made himself for the moment the idol of the mob. But to call this a case of hero worship would be ridiculous. In Bamford's "Passages from the Life of a Radical," there is a very repulsive description of "Orator Hunt," as he was called, driving into Manchester on a wagon, and swearing volubly at his attendants because they did not sufficiently excite the mob to cheer. That man, too, was a puppet, and was the object of idolatry; but there was no worship. In fact no such feeling is really possible towards a man who worships himself.

Contrast the feeling of Oliver's soldiers towards their hero. He commanded more than their bodies; he commanded their hearts and souls, just because he was to them a sort of prophetic type of the coming kingdom of God. He was greater than they, and had made them what they were. He represented the best elements of their nature, developed by a force of character which they indi-

ividually did not possess. His power of rule gave direction to their vague aspirations. His practical sense restrained their extravagance. His sovereign energy gave compactness and concentration to forces that otherwise would have been dissipated by discordant counsels. On the whole his supremacy is one of the best instances recorded in history of real government by consent of the governed. He would have had no power at all over them unless he had represented their ideas. But because he embodied those ideas far more practically than they could have done for themselves, therefore they submitted to him in matters of detail, often sorely contrary to their own inclinations, and gave him an obedience more genuine than that of fear. That he was feared is certain. Every strong man is. But he was feared by the disloyal, because he had so completely mastered the hearts of the vast majority, that traitors knew it was of no use to contend against him. And he had mastered the hearts of his soldiers, not by flattery, but by inspiration.

It makes all the difference in the world to the moral legitimacy of a popular hero's rule, whether he derives his power over men from gratification of their worse, or by inspiration of their better nature. Every man amongst us knows that there are two modes of access to his heart, one by appeals to his vanity and selfishness, another by appeals to his generosity and aspiration. A plausible companion may make you his tool by fanning your unworthy resentments, and by delusive promises of unearned gain. A true friend gains his influence by your experience that your better nature is always the stronger for his company. As with individuals, so with the mass, a man may gain ascendancy

by either of these two methods. One statesman may rise to power by making British interests the sole standard of international morality, another by arousing a national resolve to do right and shame the devil. One Ministry may gain popularity by lavish expenditure at the expense of posterity ; another by stimulating us to a manly determination to pay our way as we go on. A flattery of sectarian prejudice may always excite a passion favourable to the schemes of the flatterer ; and, on the other hand, the advocacy of equal justice to all, independently of theological opinion or religious rites, is sure of a response from the deeper conscience of the nation. Wild promises of demoralising charity will attract loud applause ; but, on the other hand, the policy of emancipating men's energies, that they may help themselves, commands a more valuable response from popular self-respect. In a word, popular favour may always be gained, at any rate for a time, by appealing to men's worse nature as well as by arousing their better. But no popular passion is worthy the name of hero worship, which has not for its object a prophet, or poet, or statesmen, able to inspire the purer impulses of our common manhood. Happily we need not go beyond our own day, or our own land, to find a man who is

"The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire,"

not because he echoes prejudice or flatters vanity, but because he has aroused, and, having aroused, he obeys, the national conscience.

Hero worship, like political idealism, has its root in a collective feeling of a tendency in the race towards a

larger, fuller life. Idealism presents this higher life as a vision on the horizon of the future. The true popular hero is a sort of present incarnation of the principles believed to make for that ideal. But the collective feeling just mentioned will sometimes create enthusiasm apart from the consciousness of any ideal, or the inspiration of any dominant hero. When the English labourers, in the reign of Richard II., rose against their masters, they could hardly be regarded as capable of any ideal except that of instant relief from their intolerable misery ; and though Wat Tyler was a leader, he was not, in the proper sense, an object of hero worship. In that case the force that for a brief space welded the masses into a resistless host was simply the enthusiasm of fellow-feeling. Horny hands, and backs bent with toil, and craving stomachs and weary hearts, were all at once recognised as the badges of a tribe having common interests as against the rest of the nation ; and the common interests inspired mutual loyalty. It is easy enough for us now to see that all such attempts to make out of a class an isolated tribe are mistaken, because inconsistent with the essential idea of a commonwealth. It is natural, perhaps, to minimize the worth of an enthusiasm inspired by hunger and want. But there is something touching in the conversion of a common misery into a bond of mutual allegiance, and in the merging of all individual sorrows in indignation against a general wrong. The same enthusiasm of fellow-feeling was illustrated in the early days of the French Revolution, when "citizen" became the only title of respect, and a blouse the only vesture of honour. The emotion of the day was a sense of brotherhood, and though conditions

of time and race turned it into wrong channels, in itself it was essentially good.

Amongst ourselves this enthusiasm of fellow-feeling is the most valuable among the moral resources of Trades Unionism. It is surely a shallow judgment that sees in the aims of Unions nothing more than selfishness and greed. Take, for instance, the case of Joseph Arch. Was it merely a desire for personal gain that made him the apostle of agricultural unions? Certainly his own experience of a labourer's bitter lot in days gone by awoke his sense of a general wrong. But his power over his fellows was given by a combination of sympathy and courage. It was not one cottage home alone of which he thought; but there arose on his imagination and his heart the vision of a hundred thousand cabins scattered over English hills and dales. His own experience showed him the inside of them all, the weary home-coming after long, heavy work, the miserable wage, the scanty food, the dripping thatch, the damp walls, the huddled wretchedness, the starved minds, the sectarian tyranny of village life. He bore the burden of all in his own soul. Fellow-feeling kindled his resolve. Fellow-feeling made him strong. Fellow-feeling enabled him to inspire others. And though the unions that arose through his work are, like all other human institutions, open to criticism, they were, at any rate, vindicated from the charge of selfishness by the enthusiasm of fellow-feeling. The same thing is true whenever our own sufferings beget in us pity for our fellows, and a resolve to help them. This is, to my mind, the noblest aspect of Trades Unionism. Critics, who assume that each man is thinking only of his own wages, imagine they

have proved all strikes to be irrational when they show how the money loss to the individual workman is generally greater than the gain. But that is far from being the whole case. The interest of labour throughout a whole people, and in successive generations, may often be served by action that brings only loss to those immediately concerned. And though it would be too much to assume that so wide a view is usually taken by men worried with the details of a local conflict, yet it is certain that Trades Unions never could have become the power they are had they not been actuated by the enthusiasm of fellow-feeling.

I said at the beginning that all genuine enthusiasm is religious in character—religious because it involves the loyal subordination of the individual to the many, of the part to the whole. And the fellow-feeling of which I have last spoken must be wider in its reach than any union hitherto formed if it is to be co-ordinate with the redemption to be accomplished. You have heard speak of the enthusiasm of humanity; the love not of class or of nation, but of the race; the passionate devotion to the progress of humanity as, for us at least, the brightest and dearest manifestation of unsearchable Eternal Power. You know whose life and death suggested this phrase. You know how, in rational contemplation of the wide brotherhood inaugurated in Galilee, the author of “Ecce Homo” found the bond of its union in the “enthusiasm of humanity,” inspired by the Founder of Christianity. The interest and the power of that enthusiasm depend on no supernatural creed; and we gratuitously impoverish ourselves if we lose its charm because our childhood’s creed is gone. There is a story in the Gospel very much to the

point. It is said that when the wonderful Prophet had retired amongst the hills, a multitude of poor people set out to seek him. They were weary and heavy laden with care. The children were tired and sick. The women were worn and fretted. Their rulers had made a prey of them, their priests despised them. There seemed no sympathy or help for them in heaven or earth. And it is said that as they lay down helpless, and stupid with misery, the Prophet whom they sought came round a corner of the valley, and, as the simple pathetic narrative has it, "Jesus, when he saw much people, was moved with compassion towards them, because they were weary and lay down as sheep having no shepherd. And he sat down and taught them many things." A strange relief this to the weary, to "teach them many things"! Aye, but the word which he spoke was the charter of the common people, the knell of imperialism, the proclamation of a universal brotherhood. Hear St. Paul, as he declares that he no longer recognises the distinctions of Greek or Jew, male or female, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, because there is born a new humanity in which all these are equal. Alas, that is so long ago! and on the spiritual fire once burning in those words generation after generation have piled the ashes of dead creeds, that could not live, because defiant of the order of the world. But ever and anon there is a probing touch that wakes the ancient flame. Again the multitudes move compassion for their toil, and weariness, and want. Again they learn respect in their own eyes from the revelation to them of the divine law of their progress. And so it is to-day.

Would to Heaven that this sacred fire could kindle

into rational, united, and firm resolve the thousands who, in the dense squalor of our gigantic towns, suffer the concentrated curse of our defective distribution of wealth, and our barbarous land laws! Let charity by all means carry its loving beneficence into the darkness. Let local authorities be stimulated to duty. But do what we may, there is no complete redemption but by an enthusiasm of fellow-feeling among the masses themselves. When we think of the greatness of the problem, all the difficulties attendant on the action of moral force rush back upon us. To unite in support of any definite scheme of social politics the millions of labourers who differ so much in education, tastes, habits, prejudices, personal aims, is a work too long for any one generation. But, then, every conceivable remedy is a mere palliative, if it does not include a more equitable distribution of the results of production, and a peaceful revolution in our land laws. And these reforms never will be achieved but by the firmly organised union of the millions who, however diverse, are alike in bearing the curse of our distorted civilization. In such vast social questions as these it is pre-eminently true that "force is no remedy." The robbery of all capitalists and landlords, even if the proceeds were equally distributed, would not sustain the population for a year; and the chaos ensuing would bring with it club law, pestilence, and famine. Nevertheless it remains true that a more equitable distribution is needed, and that our land laws are intolerable. The only issue is to be found by the peaceful reforms that will be ensured when the whole multitude of workers are united in an enthusiasm of fellow-feeling.

LECTURE VI.

REPUBLICANISM: FORM AND SUBSTANCE.

IF I have been followed with any sympathy hitherto, it will be felt, I think, that the subject of this evening's lecture offers an appropriate conclusion to the general line of thought pursued. If loyalty of the living part to the living whole is the ultimate bond of human order, we may well ask with interest what is the kind of polity which best encourages the loyalty of each member. The prevalence of moral force, we have urged, is a sign of progress, while the need for physical force is a proof of imperfect civilization. We should naturally then give the preference to any type of political constitution that secures order by its command of moral sympathy, rather than by physical compulsion. The remarks we have made on the nature of popular enthusiasm suggest an enquiry as to what form of government appeals least to the baser passions and most to the nobler feelings of mankind ; or, in other words, what political constitution is most religious in the sense of inspiring the greatest number of people with a feeling of possession by, and willing subordination to, the supreme power of evolution ? It is very probable that a considerable number of my hearers, perhaps a large majority, would answer all these questions with the one word—Republic.

Yet I suppose most of those who would give this answer—not all of them I know, but still a large majority—have enshrined Oliver Cromwell as one of the heroes of their Valhalla ; and on such a matter his opinion ought to have great weight with them. Now it is a fact, too often overlooked by half-informed people, that Cromwell never was a Republican at all, and in fact was strongly inclined to restore the institution of monarchy in his own person. For this the better informed modern Republicans are very angry with him, and are even inclined to agree with Restoration writers, that the whole of his great career is to be explained by his selfish ambition. That is a slander I can never hear with equanimity ; but the reasons why I regard it as a slander are written elsewhere. At present I desire only to show how certain it is that Cromwell was never a Republican at any moment, even when he joined in establishing the Commonwealth ; and I wish likewise to show why this was so ; for it will help us in the succeeding argument. I am here using the word Republican in its ordinary, negative sense, of a man who objects to a monarchy. Republic means much more than a kingless state, as we shall afterwards see. But you know very well that in ordinary superficial talk, when a man says, “I am a Republican by conviction,” all he means is that he is not a Monarchist. He knows, or thinks he knows, very clearly what a republic is *not*. But if you press him as to what it is, he would very likely be puzzled. He might refer you to Athens, and to Rome before the Cæsars, and to Venice,—republics of which we may have a word to say presently. But in so doing, he would prove that he knows more of forms and phrases than of

realities. Cromwell was not a Republican in this sense. Whether he was so in any other, is a question open to discussion.

During the interval between the seizure of the King by Cornet Joyce, and the flight of Charles from Hampton Court, Cromwell was continually engaged in negotiations with the object of reinstating the monarchy on terms satisfactory to the army. That he sincerely entertained this project there can be no doubt. The only matter open to dispute is his motive. Those who can believe that such a man was seduced by the enchanting prospect of being created Earl of Essex and captain of the King's Guard, show, in my view, a shallow judgment. But in any case, his conduct was inconsistent with enthusiasm for a republic. If it be asked how it was that, within little more than a year after the failure of these negotiations, he concurred in the trial and condemnation of the man whom he had been seeking to restore, the answer is that Charles spent the year in persistently intriguing to stir up a fresh war. Cromwell came to regard him as irredeemably traitorous, and his life as inconsistent with the safety of the country. It seemed to him, therefore, both just and expedient that the King's treason should be expiated on the scaffold. But there is considerable verisimilitude in the story, that when, beside the bier of the dead king, Oliver was asked what the Government of the country should be now, he replied curtly, "the same that it had always been."

The ambiguity of his language on other occasions to Whitelocke, Ludlow, and Parliamentarians generally, is best accounted for by his unwillinghood to commit him-

self to novelties likely, in his view, to be prolific in theoretic discussions rather than practical work. Like many another ardent reformer, he had an element of unreasoning and obstinate conservatism in his nature, and he could not conceive England without some form of monarchy. He certainly exerted himself, at the risk of damaging his credit with men like Ludlow, to mitigate the persecution of Royalists, and to get an Act of Oblivion passed. For that he was accused of making to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. If this was his object, he succeeded very badly. Yet it requires no great stretch of charity to suppose that he thought the time had come for "healing and settling," and that the old constitution might be rehabilitated in a form adapted to unite Royalists with Parliamentarians. The reforms most eagerly desired by him were such as would bring comfort, freedom, and security to the homes of the multitude; and all his letters and speeches betray his fear that theoretic discussions about abstract principles of government would indefinitely delay such practical measures. The practical bent of his mind has been illustrated in previous lectures. To get the law courts into working order, to give impartial justice at a cheap rate, to appoint honest preachers, to raise the level of education, to extend trade, to unite the three kingdoms as integral portions of one commonwealth, appeared to him to be aims far more interesting than the artistic production of a paper constitution. And he feared, not without reason, that if such a paper constitution were to come under parliamentary debate, he and all his generation would be dead and buried before the more practical measures could be carried.

He was confirmed in this opinion by his dislike of what he considered the visionary temper of the younger Vane, Ludlow, and others who led, or rather formed, the small Republican party. Indeed, he told Ludlow plainly that he had not much opinion of their political wisdom. "The Republicans," he said, "are a proud sort of people, and only considerable in their own conceit." In addition it ought to be borne in mind that Cromwell's intimate experiences of Parliamentary government had been almost entirely confined to the one famous House which lasted far too long for its own credit. Before the year 1640, Parliament could hardly be considered a governing body, much less the House of Commons by itself. But after the Long Parliament had sat for nine years, it became, as all elective bodies must do, unless frequently renewed, a self-contained and self-sufficient oligarchy ; a clique, a conventicle, a sectarian synod. It developed a corporate pride and arrogance, intolerant of contradiction or dispute. Where its interests were concerned it was tyrannical ; where its theology was assailed it was cruel. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Cromwell's declaration that he was shocked at the corporate despotism thus established. He had seen proscribed Royalists driven like flocks of sheep into courts or committee-rooms, and fleeced unmercifully, without any proof, as he said, that any of them deserved to forfeit a shilling. The barbarous penalties inflicted on men who outraged the religious feelings of the Commons were in his eyes a condemnation of any system that should leave supreme judicial power in the hands of a representative assembly.

Now, Oliver's greatness did not lie in the direction of philosophy; and it did not occur to him to reflect that the sins of the Long Parliament were largely due to its longevity, and to the accidental sectarian bias of the time. Its misconduct was sufficient in his view to condemn any institution that should leave a popular assembly unchecked by a permanent head of the State. Hence in all the conferences held after the execution of Charles, he reiterated his desire for a settlement "with somewhat of monarchical power in it"; and the first principle of the "Instruments" successively approved by the army was, that the Government should be "in a single person and a Parliament." It was the persistent refusal of his Parliament to accept such an "Instrument" without attempting, directly or indirectly, to discuss its basis, which turned the Protectorate into a dictatorship. If I do not use the term despotism, it is because the word has associations which do not fit the circumstances. A despot is usually supposed to hold his power against the will of the governed; and I cannot at all allow that this can fairly be said to have been the case with Oliver. He believed—and on the whole with very good reason—that the "Instrument" drawn up by the army council, in consultation with civilians of high character, represented the mind of the nation. The idea of electing a constituent assembly, and flinging down before it the whole constitution of the country for re-construction, while all the immediate interests of human life clamoured for instant "healing and settling," was, under the circumstances of the time, absurd. The emptying of the gaols, the re-settlement of property, the discharge of arrears in the law courts, the

pacification of Scotland and Ireland could not be delayed till the theory of government had been matured by a debating society. Oliver went as near as he dared to such a plan as that in summoning the Little Parliament ; and it succeeded so badly that the whole country rejoiced when it was dropped. When, therefore, Cromwell accepted the Protectorate, he had reason for thinking that this expedient was the best for securing the practical reforms desired by the nation.

This sketch of the position of affairs in the year 1653, obviously suggests some useful considerations on the relation of political forms to the substantial aims implied in the words *Republic* and *Commonwealth*. Let me remind you of what has been said before ; that while the ideas represented by these terms are apparently identical, yet in practice *Republic* is more associated with form, and *Commonwealth* with substance. Both, according to their derivation, mean the interest of the community in the national resources, in the manipulation of these resources, and in all public acts affecting the well-being of the people. But in practice *Republic* means public order without a monarch, while this negative meaning is not necessarily attached to the other word. We often speak of the interests of the Commonwealth, although we live under a monarchy. Now, the best description of Cromwell's politics is to say that he was a Commonwealth's man, as distinguished from the Royalists, because he held that loyalty to the nation did not necessarily mean loyalty to the Crown, and when it did not, it was infinitely to be preferred. He was a Commonwealth's man more truly than the Presbyterian leaders, because he felt that loyalty

to the nation was a more sacred duty than devotion to a sect or church. He was a Commonwealth's man, because he condemned all sorts of monopoly, privilege, and protection that benefited the few at the expense of the many. He was a Commonwealth's man, because, with all his conservatism, no forms or traditions prevented his striking directly at any abuse that he saw to hinder the general good. Whether the matter in hand were Chancery delays, or imprisonment of debtors, or the exclusion of Jews from England, he allowed no vested interests to stand in the way of reforms.

But on the other hand, it would be no mere paradox to assert that the very fact of his being a Commonwealth's man in the substantial sense prevented his being a Republican in the formal sense. If he had in early life carried out his alleged idea of emigrating to America, he might not have been very anxious for the maintenance of monarchical institutions there. And if he had lived in the days of Washington, his practical temper would have recognised that the only impossible constitution for the United States was a monarchy. Oligarchy was possible enough, and to a certain extent has been realised. Monarchy, however, was out of the question ; and, in such circumstances, Cromwell's strong common sense would have felt it to be so. But for his own country and his own day, the case was different. The general interests represented by the word *Commonwealth* would not have been served by theoretic wrangling over novel forms. And, therefore, he refused to join the Republicans.

Let it not be for a moment supposed that in thus ex-

plaining the Protector's views, I am quoting his authority as condemnatory of Republicanism. The time is undoubtedly coming—though it is not within a measurable distance yet—when monarchical government will be amongst the curiosities of the past. But that will be when education and moral progress have raised self-government to a sort of corporate instinct, acting through a minimum of machinery, by the prevalence of public opinion. In such a developed condition of humanity, not only monarchy, but the Republics of the present day will be a wonder to a posterity for the expensiveness, cumbrousness, and barbarism of their machinery. A Republic that subordinates to military vanity all the substantial interests of human life will be a memory of pity, if not of scorn to a better age. And the system of presidential elections in America will certainly not last as long as the world. A system that makes the supreme government of fifty millions a ball to be bandied about in a perennial game by a few professional politicians, will scarcely satisfy the higher wisdom of the future. But my object in the present argument is to insist that, in matters of government, the substance is more important than the form, and that the form best adapted to the substance in one age is not best adapted to it in another.

Now I will describe as well as I can the substantial human interests represented by the word *Commonwealth*. Next we will examine how far these substantial interests have been guarded in certain selected instances of constitutional form. These will present us with some incongruities between form and substance. We shall consider

how these arise, how they are to be remedied, and finally, what hope there is of seeing the true Commonwealth embodied in the most perfect form.

Let me then give you my idea of a Commonwealth or Republic in the substantial meaning of the word, apart from constitutional forms. It is a population holding a common territory, free from foreign control, mutually dependent on each other for security, order, and the development of national resources, all having an equal interest in the general prosperity, all adults having a voice in the general counsels, and all contributing, each according to his ability, both by labour and influence, to the common good. In such a conception the body corporate has a unity closely analogous to that of an individual organism. In the body of an animal so perfect and so admirably balanced as that of the horse, for instance, it is impossible to point to any part, and say, "See, this is the final purpose of the whole growth and constitution." The brain of the animal is carefully guarded, but certainly not for its own sake. In the horse, so far as we know, the brain exists only to co-ordinate, direct, and animate the action of the muscles and limbs. The stomach concentrates all efforts of the body on its own supplies, but only that it may instantly distribute according to the needs of every part. The head and neck have a glorious beauty, yet this beauty is but an accident of their adaptation to scan the pasture for food, and by lithe movements to gather it. Take part by part, from ears to hoof, and from glossy coat to inmost marrow,—there is not one of which you can say the whole body exists for this; not one indeed that is not absolutely meaningless except for the

service it renders to other parts. Every organ gathers and receives, only that it may give ; and the only object of ultimate service is the whole creature. St. Paul was so impressed by this subordination of each part to every other in the animal frame, that he used it repeatedly as an illustration of what the Christian Commonwealth should be.

But we perhaps somewhat miss the force of the truth thus taught, because we cannot picture to ourselves the various tissues and cells of the animal body as having a separate life, or being in any danger of rivalry. Let us then take Solomon's advice, and go to the ant, that we may be wise. Sir John Lubbock has made these little creatures the subject of observations such as Solomon never dreamed of. But after all, he has discovered nothing more remarkable than the fact that, "having no guide, overseer, or ruler," a million ants act together as though pervaded by one will. The sight is so impressive that I cannot watch the apparent confusion and marvellous order of an ant-hill, without emotion. Here is a scene I saw described somewhere, but cannot recall the reference :—Two or three insects, prospecting at a few yards' distance from the common dwelling, are attracted towards a tree by the scent of some substance valued by them as men value gold. Climbing the trunk they find quite a mine of it, where the branches fork. Now what would three men do, who, in a remote land, should find a gold mine ? They would swear each other to secrecy. They would get implements conveyed by circuitous routes, so that the place should not be suspected ; and then they would dig away in feverish haste with the hope of be-

coming millionaires before any one would share the spoil. Not so these ants. They do not even stop to have the first haul of the treasure. They scuttle back to the community as fast as they can go ; and presently come again, heralding an exploration committee, who examine, and likewise return. Presently a band of workers issue forth and make straight for the tree. A sufficient number climb it and proceed to cut away the prize, letting it fall in small parcels to the ground. Here it is caught up by waiting labourers, who in regular military order march back with their burdens. Soon the whole distance between the tree and the ant-town is marked by two living lines of going and returning workers, who keep up their labour with the regular and unwearying action of machinery. Not one insect stops to take a bite for itself, still less to bury a special treasure. Not one gets into the way of the others. There is no fuss, no hurry, no competition. It is evident that no thought of self obtrudes to disturb for an instant the busy contentment they feel in the service of the commonwealth. As we watch the moving files, a single insect stumbles, falls under his burden, and dies. But the public work goes on just as if nothing had happened. The files bend a little to pass the corpse ; and no more notice is taken, till three or four insects come out from the hill, apart from the workers, and make for the scene of the death. They examine, and apparently hold an inquest over the deceased, then carry the body out of the way, and it is seen no more. Black oblivion swallows up those tiny labourers, save where, as we may hope, they live in the memory of fellow-labourers, and continue to add their sum to the general

good. The little patriot's work is done, but death comes kindly to such a life. Of him it cannot be said, as the Psalmist says of deceased greed, that "while he lived he blessed his soul, and men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." No; all his energies were for the commonwealth, all his joy in its prosperity; and if he now drops out, let us hope he is absorbed into some other form of the universal activity that maintains a grander ant-hill than the little soul could conceive.

As regards the human commonwealth, such analogies serve for little more than to bring out the one point on which we insist as fundamental, the merging of all private ambitions in the general welfare. And one other principle they serve to illustrate,—the perfect accordance of individual happiness with the suppression of self-centred desire. For if happiness consist, as it surely does, in well-employed activities and harmony with surroundings, then that deceased insect may well have passed a very happy life, and was too well accustomed to self-effacement to accuse fate of cruelly shortening its career. But we do not wish to trifle with imperfect analogies. Doubtless where men are concerned, the greatness, the unsearchable complexity, the intense self-consciousness of each individual element in the commonwealth transcend all comparison with the blind, dull life of separate cells in an organism, or even with the keen but narrow instinct of an insect. Still, though you may boast an intellect that measures the universe, and though you may claim brotherhood with Plato and Shakespeare, you are but infinitesimal parts of an ordered whole. That humanity of

which you are born, transcends your insignificance immeasurably farther than does the insect commonwealth each individual member. And the divine universe, whose awful and entrancing order thrills us with reverence and love, bears in its bosom humanity itself, amazed, over-powered, smitten with a sense of nothingness, at the glory of the Infinite. "Behold the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance."

Do not mistake me. I am far from suggesting any such suppression of individual aspiration as is contemplated by socialism. Not to such lengths would I carry lessons derivable from the commonwealth of ants. The intensity of individual consciousness in man, and the necessities of personal development make the relation of each member to the human commonwealth a complex and difficult question. I am wholly against any attempt to deprive individual labour of its personal rewards, or any system of distributing wealth in such a manner as to encourage unmanly dependence. If I uphold free schools and free libraries, it is precisely because they have a tendency distinctly contrary to socialism, in their development of individual character, and energy, and enterprize. I am opposed to all sentimental pampering of idleness at the expense of industry, whether in the form of perpetual pensions to titled paupers, or the provision, at public expense, of blessings which the laws of nature assign as the reward of honest work. I carry my communism so far as to insist on fair play to all, an open field, and no favour. But at the same time individualism may be carried too far. And it is carried too far when men hold

themselves scornfully, or apathetically, aloof from public duties, and cynically declare that they have enough to do to look after themselves.

You say : "I am not a cell in an organism, I am not an insect in a swarm ; I am a man, I have my rights and interests, I will assert them, I will live my own life, I will have my own way, 'Every man for himself, and the wide world for us all.'" But, see ; you are called home to learn that your child is ill of a dangerous disease. You run to an overworked physician of renown, who has just lain down to snatch a few minutes' sleep. You are dependent on that man's loyalty to his profession to come instantly to your aid. You race with the prescription to the chemist. You are dependent on his honesty to give you pure drugs, and on the efficiency of his training to secure the requisite skill. A skilled nurse is needed ; and you send to an Institution imploring help. You are dependent on the public spirit and wise direction by which that Institution has been maintained, and on the sincere devotion of the lady sent to her beneficent task. The physician insists that there has been infection ; and the bearer of it turns out to have been a poor woman who came to your house for a day's work from a neighbouring "rookery," where every room in the rotten, reeking houses is kitchen, living room, and bed-room for a whole family. You rail against the greedy landlord, against the sanitary authorities, against the government of the country. Yes, but if you did but know it, you are part of the government of the country ; you are one of the forces that should have moved the sanitary authority ; you are an element in the public opinion that

should blast with infamy the filthy gains of inhuman greed. You said you would live your own life and be independent of every one. But it only needs a microscopic germ from neighbouring misery to reveal your utter helplessness apart from your fellows, to show you dependent on sanitary laws, on professional devotion, on the public spirit of your kind. And if, in return for all you owe, you will not do your part, the little ant of which we spoke has something to teach you; and the sooner you learn it the better.

The Christian apostle uttered in simple guise a profound truth when he said, "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." And the superiority of humanity as compared with lower forms of the universal law is seen, not in any self-assertion, but in the preciousness of the offering each nobler nature brings to the common good. Remember how we said that in the human commonwealth not only should each have an equal interest in the general prosperity, but each should contribute according to his ability, both by labour and influence, to the common end. The extent to which this is done is the standard of perfection in political order.

Take Russia, for instance, as perhaps the lowest type of civilised governments. There is little or no *mutual* dependence; for the whole eighty millions of the people are dependent on the Czar. It is ridiculous to say that all have an equal interest in the general welfare; for the Nihilists might sweep away the whole imperial government, and seventy millions need never know it, except as a rumour of another batch of murders in St. Petersburg.

As to contributing influence, no one is allowed to do it except the Czar's favourite officers, spies, and policemen. In the Russian communes, or villages, I believe the case is different, and they exhibit in an elementary form real commonwealths. But as regards the imperial government the very elements of a commonwealth are wanting.

If, on the other hand, my younger friends should suppose that the absence of a crowned head ensures the ideal commonwealth, and that the form of a republic brings the substance with it, there are some flagrant contradictions in history which they would do well to study. At the time of the French Revolution, and at other romantic political epochs, it was the custom to talk much of the classical republics of Greece and Rome, and to hold them forth as models to be emulated. Yet, in reality, nothing could be more absurd. For those Republics were mere oligarchies, in which a favoured few lorded it over ten times their number. It may be true that the members of these oligarchies showed great spirit in defending and extending their dominion. But these republics had very little in them answering to the substantial idea of a commonwealth as we have defined it.

Once more let me repeat that the word republic ought to mean the sum of common interests. But when only a small minority of the people living in a state are supposed to have any share in those common interests, or are allowed to have any voice in their management, the greater number of the inhabitants may be worse off than under a despotism. Worse, I say, because there is no tyranny so searching and far-reaching in its selfishness

as that of a class. The arms of an individual despot cannot reach every corner of his dominions, nor can his eyes search every cranny. Under a Caligula or an Ivan the Terrible obscure farmers and peasants, or artisans and petty merchants, may lead fairly endurable lives, if only the caprices of imperial exaction leave sufficient intervals for recuperation. But when three or four millions have over them thirty thousand masters, all naturally eager to make the most of their privileges, the case is very different. These multitudinous despots have their particular property in lands, in mines, or factories, scattered all over the country. They have monopolies, which they jealously guard. Their rights over the unenfranchised are secured by their own legislation and vindicated by their own judgments. Such was the condition of things amongst the Republics of classical antiquity. Thirty thousand Athenian citizens ruled despotically over a little empire of cities and islands subordinated to the interest, convenience, comfort, and wealth of the metropolis. Surely, in such a case of republicanism, form and substance were very wildly separated. The condition of things under the Roman Republic was much the same. The gradual emancipation of the *plebs*, or commons, undoubtedly affords an interesting study. But the emancipated plebeians became tyrants in their turn, and the industrious multitudes of distant provinces were plundered to furnish them with food and amusements. Besides, both the Athenians and Romans held hordes of slaves in personal bondage. And where slavery exists the commonwealth excludes from its unity a large proportion, sometimes the greater half, of the humanity

apparently embraced by it. Down to within twenty years ago we had on the other side of the Atlantic a notorious illustration of the divorce that may exist between Republican forms and the true Commonwealth. For over some parts of the Union the actual majority of the inhabitants were bought and sold like cattle.

Nor is the possible co-existence of slavery and Republicanism the only case in which the form may be found without the substance. In France Republican institutions have never yet given as wide a range of individual liberty, nor have they secured as direct and ready an appeal to public opinion as we are accustomed to in this country. During the recent Trades Union Congress in Paris the English delegates were naturally anxious to impress on their French brethren the desirability of following British methods of organisation. But one of the difficulties raised was a restriction of French law which does not allow any workmen's union to extend its organisation beyond certain municipal limits. Thus every town may have its union, but no two towns may combine to form a larger one. Now this seems to me to be a clear admission that all citizens have not an equal interest in the general welfare. For if they have, why should the Commonwealth fear their combining together? Of course, the same remark would be applicable to our own prohibition of the Land League in Ireland. But then it is notorious that for generations past the Irish population have *not* had an equal interest in the general welfare. On the other hand, interference with combination and public meetings in Ireland is admittedly at variance with the spirit of British law, and

is always regarded as a temporary expedient, to be abandoned in happier times. But in Republican France the prohibition of other than local trades unions is part of the regular law, and of the traditions of French bureaucracy, which always really governs, whatever may be the form of constitution. The presence of police reporters at public meetings, which we see in Ireland, with pain and suppressed indignation, was until quite recently, and I rather think is now, the constitutional routine in France. The press laws under the Republic show much more jealousy of public opinion than ours do. Our law of libel is conceived wholly in the interest of private character. To the Government we show no mercy.

In fact our notion of popular government is fundamentally different from that of France. Unconsciously, we have in effect adopted the practical view of Cromwell, that the theoretical perfection of the constitution matters little if only it can be made to work so as to embody, in constantly progressive legislation on matters of detail, the best opinion of the times. Or rather, it would be more correct to say that, in taking this view, Cromwell represented the predominant tendency of the English race. Such a tendency has of course its disadvantages; for it leads to the patient toleration of any anomaly, however obstructive, if only in practice it is found to be not absolutely incompatible with progress. An instance will at once occur to you in our House of Lords. Our long endurance of such a source of political friction, such a cause of delay and mutilation of all reforms, is an amazing illustration of our profound conservatism. But, then, the House of Lords is very astute in calculating the exact

point to which the patience of the country can be stretched. They rejected the abolition of compulsory church rates five times, then passed it. But they threw out the Jewish disabilities bill fourteen times before giving way. The effort required to carry paltry reforms like those against the dogged resistance of the Lords is so much waste of political force that ought to be available for better things. Yet, on the other hand, one reason for the endurance of the anomaly is the practical temper of the nation. For it is recognized that the enormous exertion required for its abolition is in the meantime better bestowed on legislation more immediately affecting every-day life. But whenever the convenient time comes, public opinion is quite as capable of reforming the House of Lords as of reforming the House of Commons.

In France no reform of equivalent importance has ever yet been accomplished without a revolution. And why? Because French notions about the relation of public opinion to government are wholly different from ours. The one claim made for the people is the right to say what form their government shall assume. Having dictated that, they leave it to go on as it likes, till it makes itself intolerable. Then comes revolution, and another constitution is set up. But to watch the proceedings of their government, to organise and agitate, and press for "piecemeal reforms" as occasion arises, they have not the patience. Thus, at the recent Trades Congress, one of the French delegates declared that the laborious methods recommended by the English were wholly unadapted to the genius of his countrymen. To go on meeting and arguing, and petitioning and electioneering

for twenty years, and then to have their demands conceded in a mutilated form, was too tiresome a process for their ardent temper. That may be. A sharp morning's work behind barricades is no doubt more exciting. Whether it is more effectual or not, is a question to be decided by facts—not by sentiment. And the enormously greater freedom enjoyed by Trades' Unions under our humdrum system is conclusive on that point. In fact, French traditions are only too well calculated to give the form of republicanism without the substance.

The magnificent Commonwealth on the other side of the Atlantic, the outcome of English methods unfettered by feudal institutions, is undoubtedly the noblest republic the world has ever seen. But its glory is dependent far more on the temper of the people and their splendid opportunities, that on the paper constitution of which they make their boast. The concentration of all political energy on the election of the President once in four years withdraws attention from more practical questions, and gives a longer lease to some abuses than would otherwise be possible. The tendency likewise of all political interests to converge on the manipulation of patronage is surely disastrous in its demoralisation of parties. Again, the extraordinary delusion which concedes to an oligarchy of capitalists the power to tax the million for their own enrichment, is, to my mind, inexplicable, except by the perverting influence of the spirit of intrigue engendered by the system of patronage and presidential elections. The essence of a true Commonwealth is that the interests of the many should predominate over those of the few. But here we have the precise contrary of that, and there-

fore, to that extent, the form of republicanism without the substance.

Finally, I would urge that the importance of the form to be assumed by the supreme executive authority has been greatly exaggerated. Where the head of the State reigns but does not govern, it would be difficult to name any mode of appointment more convenient than hereditary succession. Even where the head of the state governs but does not reign, as is the case with the President of the United States, popular election at short intervals of four years is attended, as I have already said, with many inconveniences. I have an opinion of my own, regarded by many of my friends as a crotchet, that, in their ultimate form, states will have no head at all other than some such functionary as a Premier, or First Minister, who will hold office just so long as he commands a majority in Parliament. This is certainly the direction in which our own system is moving, though I do not for a moment think that we are within a measurable distance of the end. I hope it is no treason to suggest that a constitution under which a retiring Premier gives advice as to his own successor, to a power growing more and more shadowy, obviously points towards an arrangement under which the retiring minister should actually nominate his own successor, subject of course to that successor's power to command a majority in Parliament. In such a headless state writs would run in the name of the nation acting through its minister. When a change of ministry was necessary everything would go on very much as it does now, only that instead of its being said that the crown had sent for Mr. A or Mr. B, it would be reported simply

that he had succeeded in forming an administration. This, of course, is mere speculation; but it is not idle if it suggests to you that other alternatives are possible besides hereditary monarchy on the one hand, or an elected president on the other. My ideal Republic would have neither president nor king.

Meantime, it is sufficient if we take home to ourselves this salutary truth, that forms of government are not nearly of so much consequence as the character of peoples. When once sufficient progress has been made in constitutional freedom to ensure practical operation to the voice of the majority, then the form that the executive government may take is of insignificant importance compared with the intelligence and the high purpose of that majority. For a nation to resolve that it will not have a king seems to sentimental young republicans an attitude of classic dignity. Yet the nation is not thereby advanced one step towards the substantial realisation of a Commonwealth. A resolve to establish common schools free and open to all would be very much more to the purpose. The essence of a Commonwealth is, as we have said, mutual dependence, and the loyal contribution of every member, both by labour and counsel, to the common good. For the realisation of this essence there must of course be free institutions—that is, the voice of the majority must prevail. But this much being secured, it may very well happen that the welfare of the Commonwealth will be better promoted by general attention to dwellings and drainage than by any agitation for Republican forms. And if I may be permitted to put into few words the object and aim of these lectures, it has been, so far as

their limited influence extends, to press home the lesson taught by those homely lines once quoted in part by Mr. Gladstone on Blackheath :—

“ People throughout the land,
Join in one social band
And save yourselves.
If you would happy be,
Free from all slavery,
Banish all knavery
And save yourselves !

“ Parsons and peers may preach,
And endless falsehoods teach ;
Think for yourselves.
Then let your watchword be
Justice and liberty ;
And toil unweariedly
To save yourselves.”

That indeed is the supreme political moral we derive from our study of the Commonwealth period. If we ask what led to the rise of the Commonwealth, it was an extraordinary tide of patriotic emotion that filled the minds and hearts of common men. If we ask what led to its fall, it was the exhaustion of that tide by reaction. Again, if we ask what inspired that emotion, it was no theory, Republican or otherwise, as to abstract principles of government ; it was a religious conviction that the soul of man is too precious to be the sport of monarchs or court favourites, and that the duty of defending conscience lay not with a few leaders, but with every Englishman. And that is what we must see if the problems of our time are to be solved. You must learn to regard your duty to your country not as the theme of sentimental debate, but as a religious obligation, failure

in which must bring the perdition of self-contempt. You must cease looking to leaders to do everything, and must recognise that they are as powerless without you as Cromwell would have been without his Ironsides. You must regard yourselves as highly privileged to be the inheritors of such memories as our history enshrines; and, seeing how much wider are the destinies of England than Pym or Hampden or Cromwell could have dreamed, you will desire that the generation, whose action affects the awakening liberties of two hemispheres, should play their part, if not as brilliantly, at least as faithfully as their heroic fathers.

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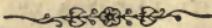
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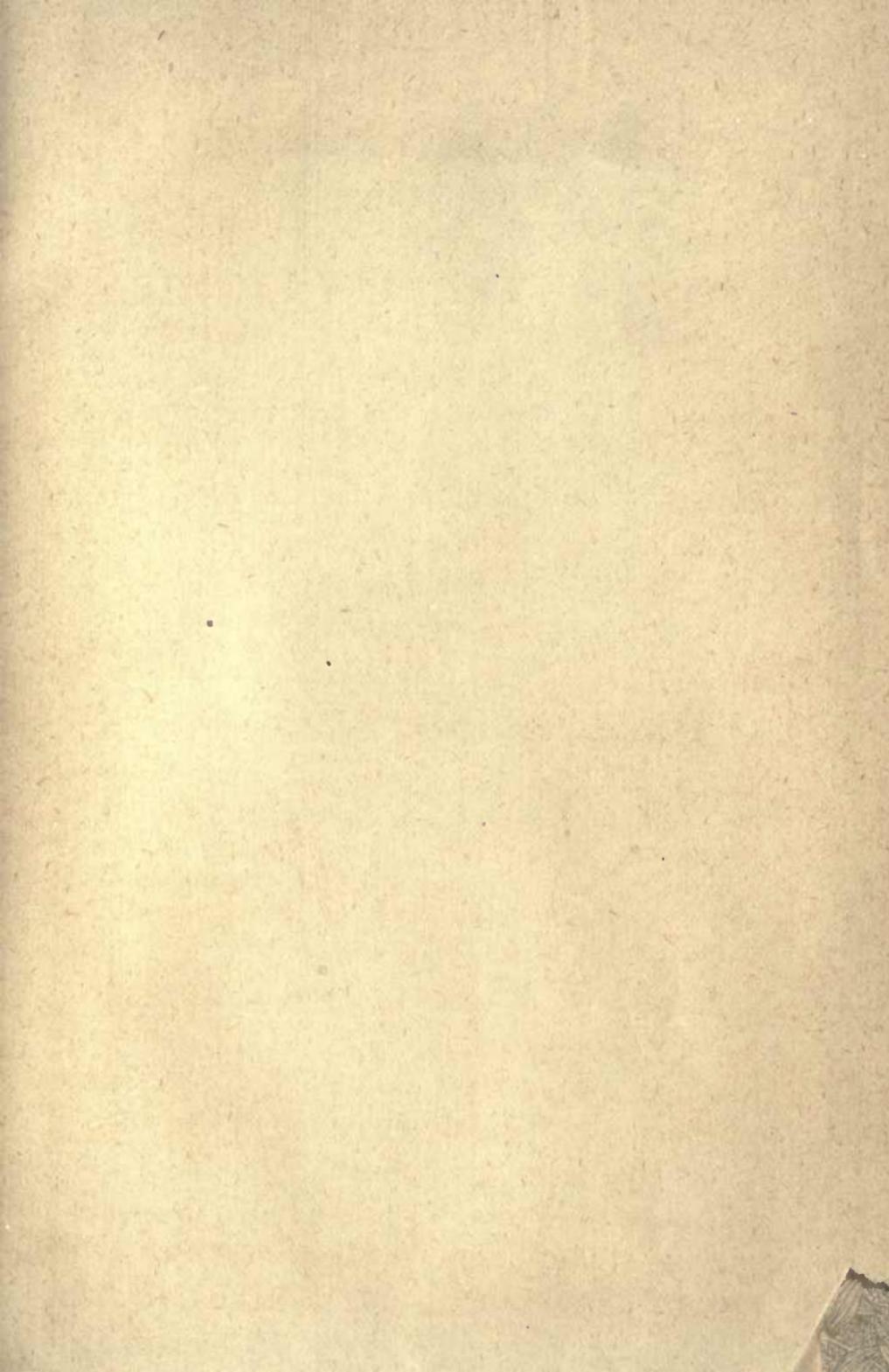
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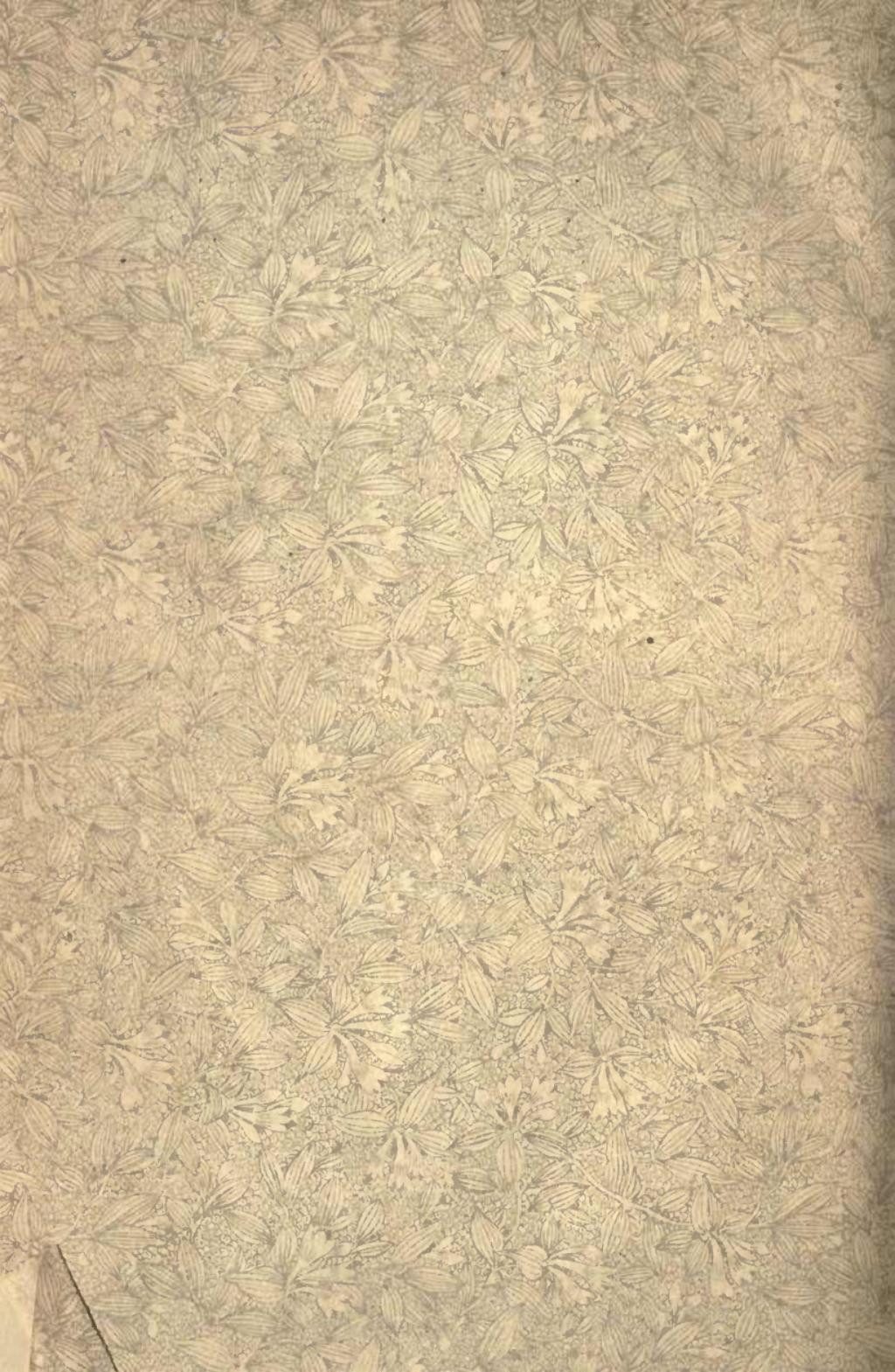
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